

This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

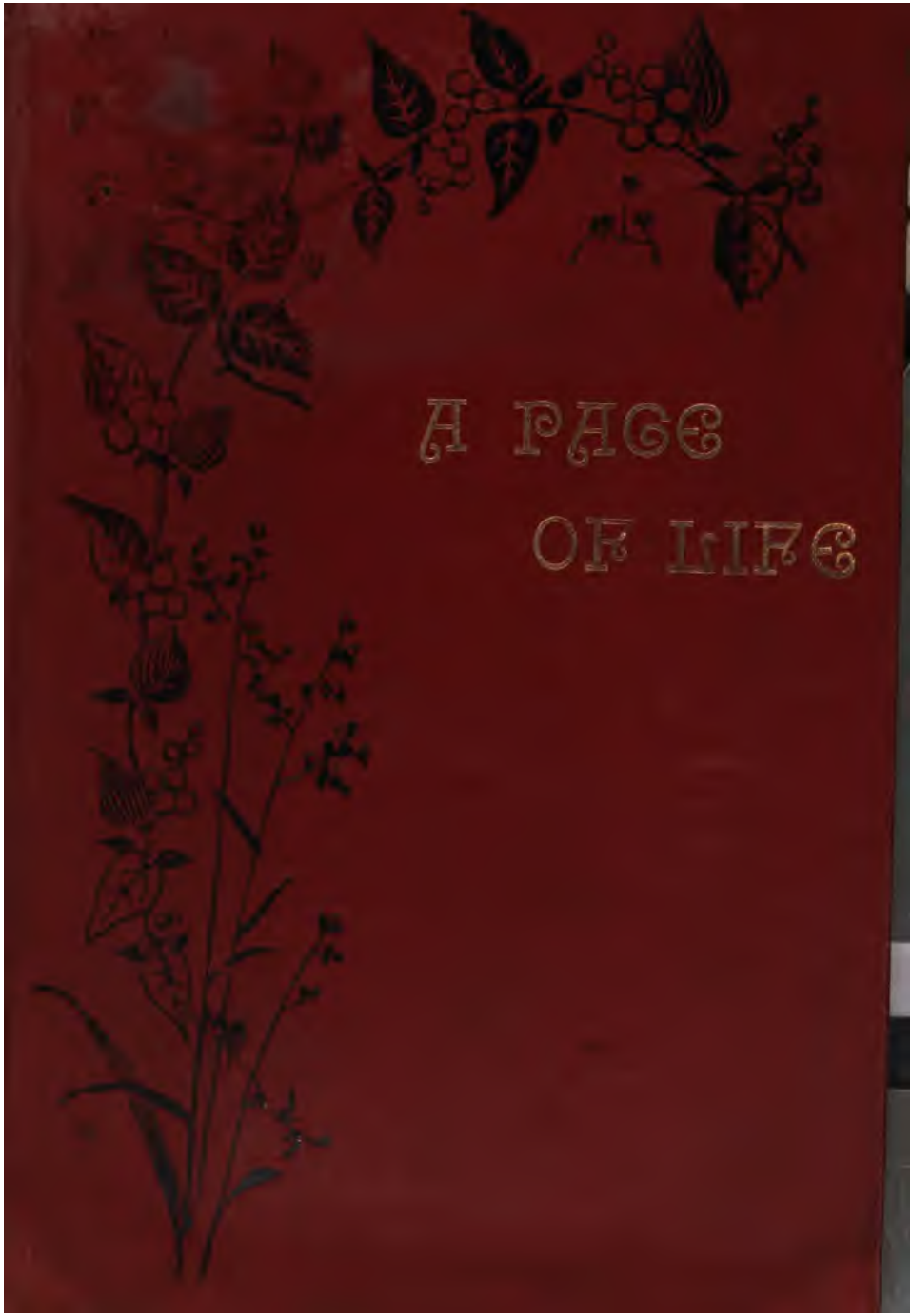
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

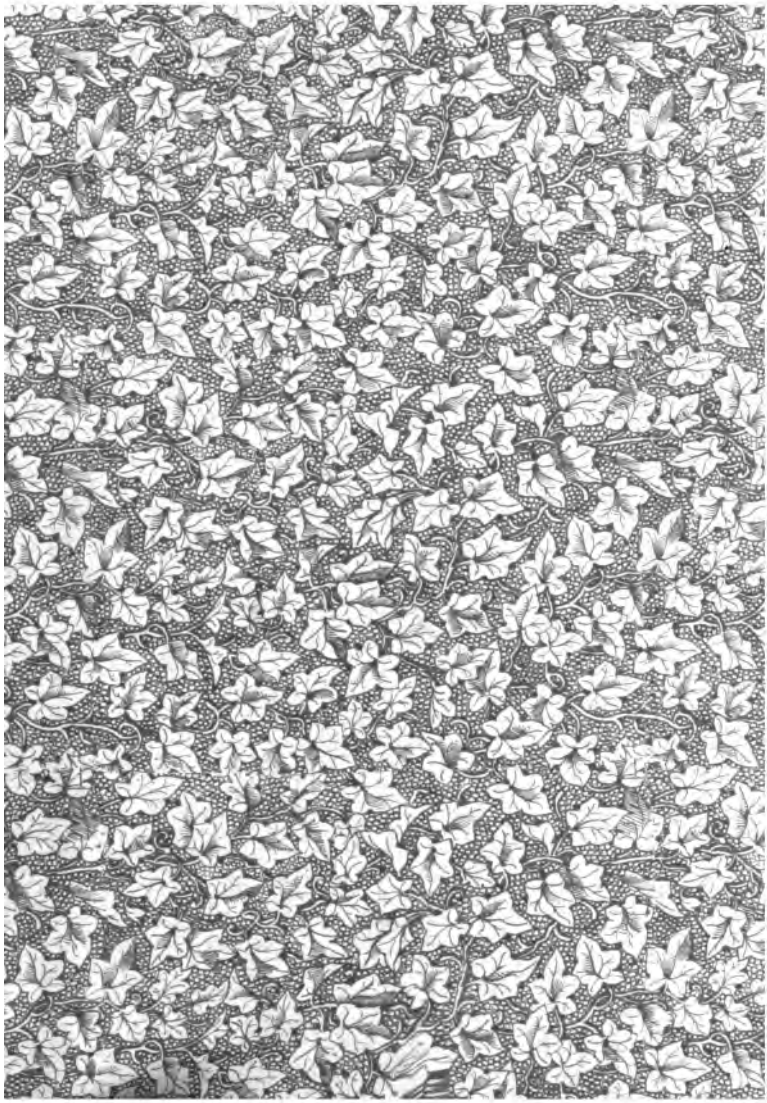
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

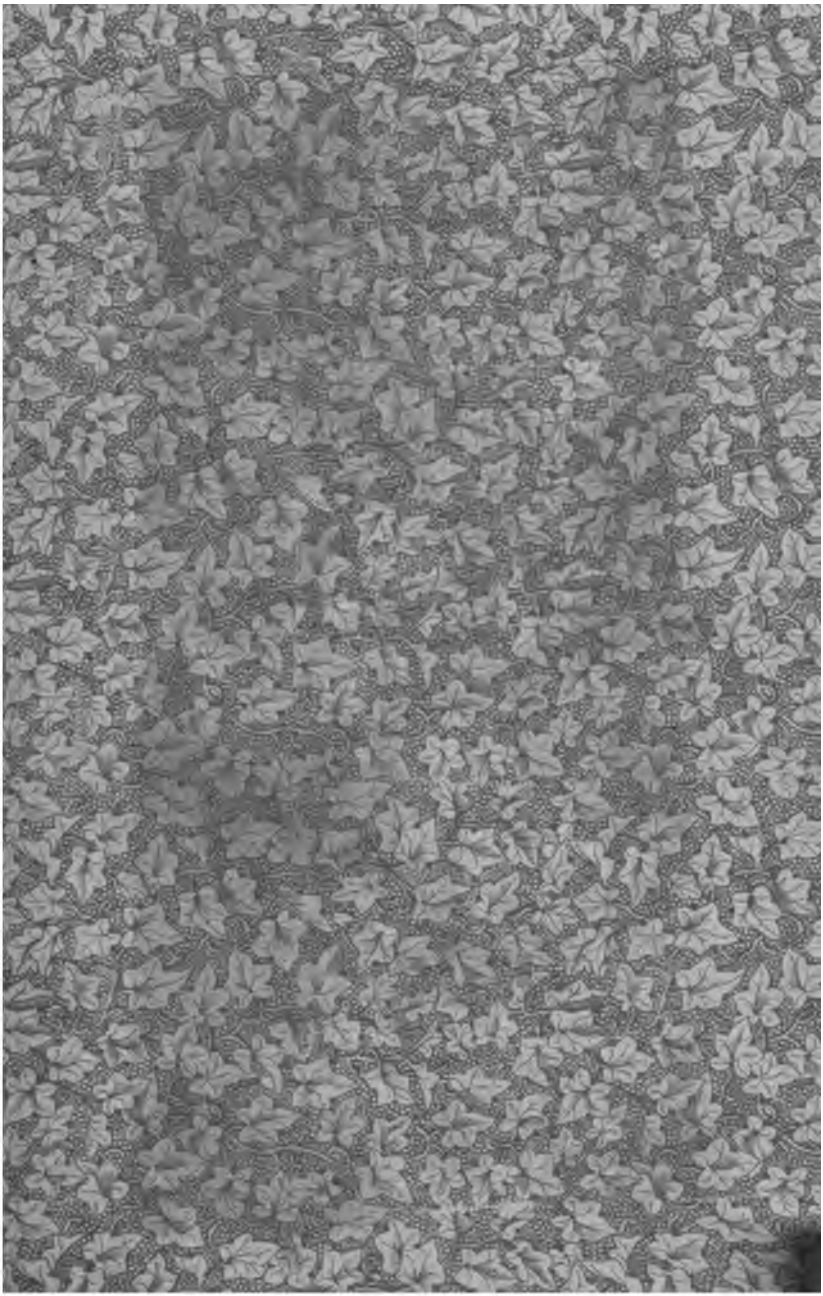
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`


A PAGE
OF LIFE





A PAGE OF LIFE.

BY

JULIAN SMITH.

REMINGTON AND COMPANY, LIMITED,
LONDON: 15, KING STREET, COVENT GARDEN,
AND SYDNEY.
1894.
All Rights Reserved.

A PAGE OF LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

The watering-place of Kidbrook stands by the sea at the wider end of a V-shaped gorge, through which runs the narrow river, the Kid. The hills covered with gorse, and ending on the shore in red sandstone cliffs, shelter the clustering houses, the rows of white, thatched cottages held by the fishermen, and the mansions, bordered with strips of timbered pasture, scattered along the riverside, inland. One of these houses, still recognised as the Priory, stands close to the high road ; a low stone structure, masked to-day with white plaster, built in the shape of two right angles,

and so forming the end of a square, while the unbroken line at the back of the house, or garden front, is planned as a terrace. The building is so low that the single upper story, formed in the deep-pitched roof, leads to the supposition that it had once been thatched instead of slated. The roof on the garden front is adorned with three regular gables, each ornamented with a curtain of lace-like plaster moulding of the beautiful pattern of the acanthus and the rose, and dating probably from the time when Henry VII. brought Italian moulders to England to decorate his famous chapel. Among the many rooms in the house was a small sitting-room ; the walls were covered with stretched silk of a pale blue, the chairs were of white enamel, gilded and covered with hand-worked tapestries representing groups of flowers, mounted on cloth of the colour called " lia de vin." Seated on a low, high-backed prie-dieu was a lady engaged in embroidering an open-worked white silk flounce. Mrs. Whythiham was small and thin, with arched eyebrows, dark eyes, and refined though somewhat sharpened features. Her hair,

dark, but just dashed with powder, was taken from her forehead over a high cushion, and arranged in four loose curls falling to her shoulders. A little cap, like a rosette of Honiton lace with a scrap of blue ribbon peeping from one side, was the crowning head-dress. She wore a sarcenet silk dress of a light yet rather sombre blue, draped with large panniers over a very fine unbleached linen petticoat. Covering her slender throat and bust, and within the loose sleeves, were folds of cambric with an edging of Honiton.

As she drew the thread in and out of her work and carried it floating over the slender extended little finger, she often sighed and stared through the window up the bare garden to where the mist of a February morning still hung beneath great groups of elm and oak, the remnant of a planted chase, or she looked out across a trim-paved walk and haw-haw and divided fields to the grey Channel. Her morning reveries were presently dispelled. A maid came to tell her that at Timkin's cottage a woman was took very badly, and Mrs. Whythiham being a lady devoted to drugs and charities, sent

for her walking things, her thick black high-heeled shoes—since the cottage was near and the road clean—a furred cape to throw across her shoulders, a large beaver hat with a cockade of blue ribbons and three ostrich tips, and then a silver-headed walking-cane as a protection against aggressive dogs and runaway horses.

Timkin's lath and plaster cottage was small and much in need of mending. After some conversation, Mrs. Whythiham, half-choked with wood smoke, went up the narrow staircase, which was almost too narrow for the passage of her ample skirts, and, bending her head at the low doorway so as not to spoil her hat and feathers, went into a small room.

There was a wide, open fireplace, a sloping roof, and a latticed window on a level with the floor. The invalid was on a low bed, with two chaff mattresses; and a cradle in an opposite corner, covered with a checkered handkerchief thrown over the hood as an extra curtain, pointed to the cause of the commotion.

After talking for a few moments, Mrs. Whythi-

ham, having taken off her gloves, held out her hand to the sick woman, saying:

"Well, and whose child is it?"

"If you please, ma'am, it is Mr. Whythiham's," was the feeble but unflinching reply, in simple confidence.

Mrs. Whythiham's mind leaped some months into the past, but it was so long ago she could think of no peculiarities of her husband's behaviour.

"I am pleased to hear it," she said, quietly. "I shall send you some things presently and come and see you again."

Tranquilly leaving the cottage, she walked home, meditating on a gentle method of facing Mr. Whythiham with his reputed paternity. It was after the twelve o'clock luncheon, when Mr. Whythiham was enjoying a little snuff taking, that Mrs. Whythiham thought it an expedient moment to break the news. Mr. Whythiham was about five feet two inches, and thin and wiry; middle aged, with little dark eyes full of impertinent malice and humour. He wore brown cloth knee-

breeches and coat, a mouse-coloured silk waistcoat; and his grey wig, fastened at the back with a black velvet bow, had not received the attention of the powder closet for the last three days.

"Childebert," Mrs. Whythiham said, gently, "I believe I have to congratulate you on becoming a father this morning."

Mr. Whythiham looked up, and one corner of his mouth fell about an inch-and-a-half. "How the deuce do you know," he said, flipping his handkerchief in the air.

"And the young mother and the child are both doing well," she added, calmly.

"Oh, d—n!" said Childebert, turning his back on his wife, and taking pinch after pinch of snuff in quick succession, in order to choke off a mouthful of fashionable oaths. "What a fool you are, Emma," he said, testily, turning round and facing the lady of his household as though ready to stand an attack and do battle.

"So," Mrs. Whythiham continued, "I have sent her two bottles of your best port."

Mr. Whythiham winced. "It's too dear," he

muttered, still relieving his feelings by playing with the snuff.

"Too dear for a producer of your race?" said Mrs. Whythiham, lifting her eyebrows a little. "A pound of tea and some soup and jelly follow to-morrow. I admire Mrs. Whythiham number two, Childebert, I tell you frankly, I think her a good woman."

There was a pause of some moments, Mr. Whythiham was touched to the quick by his wife's unexpected tenderness for her own sex, and her generous amiability towards himself. He admitted, with a sigh of emotion, that women were beautiful and good and kind, and fair in form, and sound in mind.

The door opened and a tall girl entered the room. Her movements were naturally elegant. Her face was oval, with dark eyes, rather wistful in expression, and her brown hair was dressed in the fashion of the day, and with but little powder. Her skirt was of stout unbleached linen, embroidered a little, her long coat of brown cloth was lined and trimmed with exquisite fur, and her hat a fanciful basket

affair, full of frosted monstrosities, supposed to be dead sticks and grasses. From a huge muff she led by a broad green ribbon a Maltese dog.

"Did you enjoy your luncheon party, Helena," said her mother.

"Monstrously," she replied, stooping down to unfasten the dog's ribbon; "and I have heard a vastly entertaining tale from Harriet Barmondsey."

"What?" said her father, looking at her sharply, fancying that some news of his minor sins might be on the wind.

"A vastly entertaining tale," said Helena—"everyone is repeating it. The other morning, when the men were going down to fetch the early salt water, they saw two poor gentlemen seated on a door-step asleep, with their arms around one another's necks, their hair out of place, their dress disarranged. One waterman wanted to souse them, but the others woke 'em up and offered to take 'em home for a crown a-piece. The one was Captain Snouque, and the other that preposterous Mr. Gashier, and now they won't speak to each

other, won't even meet on the same side of the street, and the women say it will be a fight."

"Tom-fools," said Mrs. Whythiham, quietly.

"Humph," said Mr. Whythiham, with an easy mind, "and who told Harriet Barmondsey?" For there was no harm in poking into other people's scandals, in fact it was amusing to discover how many variations of one story could be found in, let us say, twenty-four hours.

"Lord! I don't know," said Helena, indifferently, "it was much too fine a tale to ask who made it, but I suppose as you had not heard it yesterday it only spread to-day."

"It is a romance of Mr. Gashier's to prove himself a friend of Captain Snouque," said Mrs. Whythiham.

"My dear," replied her husband, in paternal tones, drawing his body into the rigidly muscular condition thought sometimes to be necessary to enforce the notion of a life so blameless it may be looked at, "Mr. Gashier is a most respectable man. Why his uncle is—oh, confound! I forget what," he added, sharply, "something or another,

and Gashier, I believe, ought to have a handsome income."

"Ah!" said Mrs. Whythiham, with a long inflection, "and Captain Snouque belongs to one of the oldest families in England, everyone's heard of Snouque—no one has ever heard of Gashier."

"Snouque is a penniless idiot," was the reply, for Mr. Whythiham found Snouque a useless fellow—a log in the club, who wouldn't play cards because he couldn't stand the points, wouldn't accommodate himself with debts of honour, and never had a shilling to oblige anybody.

"A man of race is a man of grace," said his wife, airily, amusing herself.

"Hang the man of grace," said her husband.

"My dear, have mercy on yourself," said his wife.

"Damn the man of grace, and the man of race too," he snapped, and seeing Helena twisting an end of the green ribbon over the tip of the dog's

nose, he left the room in a tantrum, to take his hat and cane and hurry down to the local club to hear what the deuce the women had all been gabbing about.

CHAPTER II.

The iron gates guarding the Priory from the common highway clashed behind Mr. Whythiham, who, trim, alert, agile, and irate, took his way down the road where comfortable houses stood on either side at discreet intervals, through the narrow, irregular Fore-street, where houses, big and little seemed built so closely as to push each other out of shape, to where at the end stood the York hotel, and at the corner, Brown's coffee-rooms, with a large bow-window facing the sea and the narrow ill-laid brick walk called an esplanade.

Brown's coffee-room formed the local club, where Mr. Whythiham was well known, being a gentleman who ate and drank largely, for the good of the society, and gambled freely on any occasion,

yet, a cautious gentleman, objecting to quarrellings ending with the sword.

Mr. Whythiham sauntered up the steps and along the narrow passage of the coffee-house into the club-rooms, with a face and manner of bland indifference, anything but a man piqued with curiosity to taste the morning scandals. The rooms were large and leading one into another. Play had already begun, and there were gentlemen rattling the dice to earn a living and lose a fortune.

Some men still wore the tricorn hat, others had it under the left arm, some were chatting, some drinking, and some reading the morning gazette of the day before yesterday, which had just come down by coach, and talking over the feasibility of having it brought by horse, when it would arrive twelve hours earlier—a monstrous advantage—provided, as some one hinted, that the messenger did not get drunk on the way, sleep off the twelve hours, and arrive twenty-four hours after the coach. It was asked why Brown did not see to this proposal, and someone declared that Brown was a stalking-horse

and didn't exist. One of the young men began to lay heavy bets as to who Brown was, and Mr. Gashier swore on a hundred guineas he would call Brown by a new method of ghost raising. One man declared he had tried all he could for years to discover Brown.

"I have even tried," he said, plaintively, "not paying the bills, but it's no use, they never claim, so I had to begin paying again."

It was quietly agreed to have a squabble over cards, engaging two or three unsuspecting elderly gentlemen in play, to raise an uproar from them. "A few lambkins," as Mr. Gashier said, "two or three old ones and cheat 'em under their noses, they never can stand it, they always go like good squibs, two or three times round and then bust."

In time the unsuspecting middle-aged gentlemen were engaged in play at tables side by side, the game was judicious, the stakes were carefully raised, when someone dropped a card expressly, and the elderly gentleman opposite was accused of being a defaulter.

"You tell me I cheat, sir?" said impugned decorum.

"I believe so, sir," was the reply.

"You venture to tell me, sir, that I cheat?" thundered the incensed gentleman, his face purpling, while the other men's crests were rising, and there was a general attention. "You boiled blue-bottle you!" he shouted, rising and shoving the table over on to the floor, upsetting the other players and the neighbouring table.

"You liar. I'll fight you," he cried, touching the pommel of his sword.

The prostrate gentlemen scrambled on to their legs, swords were drawn in an instant, sides were taken and ranged, and calls of "order!" rang through the room. Money, cards, dice, lay littered on the floor among the overturned chairs and tables, and a stream of white hair-powder hung floating in the air. The door-way was crowded with the serving men, in drab coats turned up with blue, betting among themselves in whispers as to who would go down first. The gentlemen of forty years of age were longing to

slash those of twenty-five and thirty into mincemeat, and the younger men were as angry at having been shoved on to the floor.

"Send for Brown, d—n you. We must restore order. We are not going to have blood and guts here," roared some of the onlookers.

"No interference in a point of honour," retorted others.

"It's Brown's house, he can. Here are six of 'em blading each other, and spoiling our afternoon."

The gentlemen quarellers were already taking the first step forward and preparing for the preliminary crossing of weapons, when Mr. Whythiham, looking extremely mischievous stepped in between the first couple.

"Gentlemen," he said, "this is my house. Let me ask you to put up your swords. If you must fight there is always the street."

The weapons were dropped. The men drew apart, the older ones growling oaths of future vengeance and the younger ones, in shouts of laughter, declaring that it was a wager to raise the

invisible Brown. After such an engagement most gentlemen wanted a little liqueur to restore their tone, and Mr. Whythiham was too much of a man to do anything but laugh and pardon Mr. Gashier for being such a deuced clever dog. Half-an-hour later he was walking home thinking that he had better catch Gashier, and to begin with he might as well marry Helena to him as to any one else. With Gashier as Helena's husband what a vista of pleasurable satisfaction! Mr. Gashier sat down again to the facinating bits of pasteboard, and in the course of the afternoon was betting heavily on the trump card.

"Is there a balance to meet a debt of honour?" someone queried.

"All sound," said Mr. Gashier. "I intend to raise on my reputation. I mean to go for old Whythiham's girl. There's heaps of money. He is longing to get rid of her I hear, because he thinks she knows too much and might be shocked at dear papa."

Captain Snouque, who was standing in the window picking his teeth and sipping orange

brandy, said to himself: "Good Gad, I'm hanged if you do, after the cock and bull tales you've been spreading about me putting my arms round your confounded scrag of a neck. I'll take the daughter myself, money or no money. You prating parrot. I'll pip you." And he resolutely made up his mind to circumvallate Madam Whythiham on the first occasion.

CHAPTER III.

A few days later Mrs. Whythiham was seated in the long drawing-room at the Priory. It was a room that had once been the refectory, with deep embrasured windows and a vaulted ceiling, now painted with wreaths of flowers and winged Cupids chasing butterflies. The walls were covered with panels of pale yellow satin, each being embroidered with a frame-work of branching trees, and brilliantly-feathered birds, and the polished floor shone with the reflections. Down the room were placed deal tressel tables, one bare, one loaded with rolls of flannel, calico, linen, woollens, and another littered with half-made clothes. It was an afternoon for the meeting of a charity society, when rich and idle women meet for an hour or two to

make wearing apparel for those that had little or none; and the button-holes frayed, the stitches came out with a good tug, and no button had a neck above breaking. Indeed, Mrs. Whythiham usually spent the following afternoon in having the ladies' work unpicked by her maids and done over again, in a serviceable manner.

The Maltese dog was asleep on a cushion in the sunshine, and Helena was moving from table to table.

Mrs. Whythiham was watching her and looking into the future of her happiness. Every good fortune should surround and protect her. Helena, she mused, was graceful, attractive, intelligent. What a charming woman for any man, to adorn his household; but where was the man that could match with Helena? Some honest honourable fellow would do; but for a man of parts and sensibilities!! Mrs. Whythiham sighed. No mincing varnished ape, she shivered at the notion; and an ordinary man of decent manners and good heart was always hard to find. While Mrs. Whythiham was searching the list of her acquaintances,

the ladies of the Charity Society began to arrive, and ladies dressed in delicate silk gowns, with longcloth walking sacques and hats, large and small, of every extravagant variety, each lady carrying an *etui* with thimble, scissors, and the implements for needlework, and each smiling almost to a state of dimples, as an act of pleasing politeness. By degrees the flannel petticoats, the frocks, the pinafores were dealt round to the white hands that worked for charity's sake, and the needles were no sooner threaded and the work laid comfortably on each needlewoman's soft lap than tongues began a gentle hum of intelligence, and it was extraordinary, without uttering an ill-bred word against anyone, what an amount of disagreeable feeling was unwittingly excited. They talked of missionary works, a suitable and pious subject, and of the devotion of some Englishmen in living on ample subscriptions in excellent climates. One lady recounted a touching tale of work in the Bahamas, islands infested with cannibals somewhere south of New York, but another and better informed woman declared that these had been taken by Columbus,

years before, and Christianized like England, by the Spaniards. While geographical and historical disputes were exercising dormant brains, a large lady, with a bony face and gentle manners, gradually, on frivolous pretexts, disengaged Mrs. Whythiham from the party, and in the embrasure of a window, and with a sigh, began, "Ah, my dear, let me commiserate with you." Mrs. Whythiham became all attention, wondering whether Helena had been flirting immodestly. "Why, yes, my poor dear friend," said the charity lady, shaking her head sadly and feeling for her handkerchief, "I've heard the sad news about Mr. Whythiham's irregularities, and as a wife—" Here something in the listener's face made her pause, and she added, "How distressing for you and Helena."

Mrs. Whythiham asked for some particulars, having heard nothing, and querying whether there could have been cheating at cards or merely duelling.

"My dear! have you not heard?" said the charity lady, a trifle piqued. "Mr. Whythiham has forgotten himself with a village girl and is now a

father ;" she ended with a sob sounding as though there was a laugh behind it.

" So I am aware," said Mrs. Whythiham, " for I was called to the bedside on the occasion. He is a reasonable man to preserve his race, it is too old to die out. And, Madam, may I remind you of the national motto—*Honi soit qui mal y pense.* It is a pity that after so many years it should be forgot. Would you like another petticoat, or may I find you some strings for the one you are holding, to work ?"

The charity lady was recalled to her duties to the society she was an ornament to, just as the other ladies were beginning to remark the privy conversation—but question and surmise were checked by the unexpected announcement of Captain Snouque. For the last three days he had called at the Priory, and been told by Mr. Whythiham's order that the lady of the house was out, so he determined to call on a day when all the world knew she was at home. While undergarments, little innocent shirts and pantaloons that would raise a smile rather than a blush, were being thrown be-

neath the tables with feminine haste, Captain Snouque sauntered composedly into the room. He was a small, strongly-built, active man, with a fine complexion, brown eyes and a red moustache. He had a habit of spoiling the work of the barber by clapping his hands to his head, and leaving a line of reddish brown hair between his face and his well-powdered crown. To say that Captain Snouque was a Rabelais in regimentals, would perhaps be an unappreciated parallel. Having made a bow to the company in general, and to Madam Whythi-ham in particular, and learning the occasion of the meeting, and why there were so many ladies and no gentlemen, he said, as he seated himself, that he should be charmed to sew, too. The ladies tittered with contempt at this excellent joke, and every one of them, the more elderly to the front, in right of precedence, pressed smilingly forward to offer for his use her particular *etui*. Some cases were fitted with implements of gold inlaid with turquoise, some were rococo, others of chased silver, or of silver set with garnets, yet, in spite of these glittering attractions, Captain Snouque accepted the

petticoat, needle, thread, and plain thimble from Mr. Whythiham. The thimble was too small for his finger, and though he begged to be furnished with another, no lady had a larger to offer.

They watched him as he threaded the needle and began to sew exactly as though he had been well accustomed to the delicate and intricate art.

The gentle admiration was diverted by the announcement of Mr. Gashier.

Mr. Gashier was, by Mrs. Whythiham's order, to be received on all occasions, and having by chance seen that beast Snouque go into the Priory on a sewing afternoon, he thought there must be something more than sewing, and after a suitable delay, demanded admittance. Mr. Gashier was tall and thin, with blue eyes and a pallid face, and the languid bearing of a man who takes life too seriously. His dress was always faultless, since it was not like a gentleman to go uncared-for. The ladies, who had formed a circle round Captain Snouque, broke the charming ring to receive Mr. Gashier.

Mr. Gashier was amazed, he never knew Snouque was a charity man.

Bianco, the Maltese dog, having snuffed up and down Mr. Gashier's stockings, growled and glowered persistently, a trial to any gentleman's nerves to resist kicking him.

The ladies became more enchanting than ever, and in a short time set Captain Snouque and Mr. Gashier to thread needles against each other, betting shillings, with singular random for their house-keeping purses, as to whose needle would be threaded first. Captain Snouque always won, giving his opponent no quarter, and when it was declared he cheated or had been bred a tailor, he replied with excellent good humour that he had had to work for his living from the age of three years, and used to hem dusters in the nursery for a halfpenny a-piece; and, he added, grinning at Mr. Gashier, "I used to be glad when there was a safe-edge."

If Captain Snouque had not been gifted with a moustache, the ladies, such was their surprise, might have denounced him for a woman, and Mr.

Gashier allowed his thin, clean-shaven upper lip to curl a trifle at the extraordinary freaks of some of these men of old family.

The merry company, having forgotten their charity, were getting ready to break one another's hearts with tart sayings, when the happy advent of the tea board occasioned a peaceful diversion.

Who can resist the soothing perfume of a cup of tea?

The ladies grew absorbed in watching the distribution of the beverage, the elders for once congratulating themselves upon the rights of age, which now entitled them to a cup of the first brew.

Captain Snouque still drank his tea out of a cup, but Mr. Gashier, being a more modish man, took his from the saucer, as it was affirmed was the fashion of the Court.

A gentle stillness stole over the assembly in the long yellow drawing-room, the voices grew lower, the conversation more insipid, and the manners quieter; the tea-drinking came to an end, and as the last cup was satisfactorily emptied, the well-dressed ladies and the gay gentlemen one and all

prepared to make their adieux, never having so much enjoyed an afternoon of charitable purpose.

CHAPTER IV.

Mr. Whythiham was a patron of sports, and rode with some regularity to the Kidbrook Fox Hounds.

It was an old-fashioned pack, dedicated to S. Julian as patron, and rather for the art of the chase than for the pleasures of slaying, and most of the veteran supporters had well-studied "The Entire Art of Venerie," by the renowned and Christian Abbess, Dame Juliana Berners.

There was an excellent rule of the Pack that any horseman damaging crops paid a guinea, while in the field, to the farmer or his representative, which prevented much ill-feeling.

On a breezy February morning, when the wind was beating gently south south-west from across

the Channel, and the earth was damp and slightly loosened after the stiff January frosts, Mr. Whythiham was stirring his house into a state of exasperated commotion because he was going hunting. By the help of prolonged swearing, he had managed to pull on a pair of jackboots reaching up the thigh and fastened to the waistcoat by a strap. His blue coat was long, reaching to the knee and cut up the back of the skirt, so that when the wearer was mounted it fell freely on either side of the saddle, and he carried, as most men did, a short sword, so short as to be covered by the coat. As was usual for active work, his hair was in a queue, though some men wore theirs fastened with a linen strap and a buckle in place of the dressed velvet bow.

Taking his tricorn hat, with a few last maledictions on blockheaded humanity, he stamped to the door and mounted his horse, talking to it in the most winning and caressing manner as he gathered up the reins, and rode slowly through the gate.

The meet was at about a mile's distance,

and Mrs. Whythiham and Helena, with feet well protected by pattens, and skirts over their arms, followed at leisure along the footways, the roads being too bad to permit of the carriage being used on such a slight occasion, owing to the possible and serious damage to the paint.

In a grass field skirted by light copse the grace and fashion of the district were assembled, for every woman liked to see her husband ride to hounds, and every man liked to show his wife to the world.

There was here and there a high yellow curricle horsed with a pair or a tandem: there were low caleche, with the horses harnessed two next the carriage and one in front, on account of the heavy roads; and narrow coaches to hold only two persons inside, and painted for the most part bright green or bright blue. There was one large yellow coach with four horses, and a riding boy on a spare horse to be used when the coach-wheels dragged in the ruts. There was the coach of the great Lady Calangay, who always had three men on the footboard behind, because her great-grand-

father had been called a Duke. Moreover, she always made her husband ride on the front seat, because his name was only Calangay, whilst hers had been Diddler. The name Diddler was known to all the world, a name to beware of, and had it not lent a beautiful adjective and verb to enrich the language?

Lady Calangay cheated righteously, as became her fanciful position, being a hypocrite every day of the week and a natural woman on Sundays.

Poor Sir Thomas Calangay was mortally afraid of his wife—she was such a superior woman, and always telling him about coats-of-arms, and precedences, and social rights of way, till his head ached, and his memory grew muddled, and his heart misgave him, and he wished he had married anybody rather than the great-granddaughter of an infernally new Court-branded Duke.

The mounted men wore coats of blue, green, or scarlet cloth, and the parsons in the saddle, being men off ecclesiastical duty, were dressed as others, the profession being sometimes indicated by two

little lawn lappets floating from the neck over the bright waistcoat.

There was a sprinkling of horsewomen, habited in skirts of blue, green, or crimson velvet, with gilets and coats of coloured cloth, and wearing black tricorn hats with a rosette of colour on the left side, though some ladies preferred a cloth riding-hood as a protection to the hair.

Standing among the bright carriages and pacing riders was a scattered crowd, the backbone of the country, the heart of the nation, patient, watchful, dressed in cotton hoods and smocked frocks, the only weapon a blackthorn stick.

The hounds were laid on to draw a neighbouring wood of a few acres, where, it was said, lay a good dog fox, who had run many a time and given the boldest satisfaction to the pack.

In about a quarter of an hour the fox broke cover, and with some shrill halloas the mounted company followed the sailing hounds.

Captain Snouque was galloping along on a fair-bred horse, who took to his fences kindly and had a rooted indisposition to face water; and Mr.

Gashier, in boots too small and coat too tight to comfortably allow of any exercise of violence, forgetting the laws of horsemanship, was pressing his horse in the second field.

They had been running for some time when Mr. Whythiham, riding his own line on the extreme left, in jumping a thickset hedge nearly landed on three men lying on the edge of the ditch on the further side. He pulled up his horse, and, flourishing his whip, cried :

"Who the devil are you, sirs, hiding in the ditch to the peril of the neck of every gentleman who rides at his fence like a man. Get up, you cowards, and if I see you lurking about I'll set the Beadle after you, and have you pilloried on Sunday."

The men made no reply. Mr. Whythiham, noticing the heads of several eight-gallon kegs peeping through the long grass under the hedges, quickly understood that these were no common rascals, and taking off his hat, wished them good morning and a safe journey, and riding off as fast as his horse could carry him, he did his loyal best

to keep the hounds in a distant direction. The fox ran with unprecedented art, the hounds streamed along over the warm scent, the fencing was excellent.

Mr. Gashier lost his place in the front by incontinently riding wheat, and when stopped and fined he murmured that he thought it was grass, and was smartly compelled to pay the guinea to farmer Hooker. Captain Snouque turned in his saddle and laughed, but soon had something else to think of, for as he rose at his next fence he saw staring him in the face from below a spiked harrow drawn up under the hedge. Skulls and crossed bones could not have given him such a turn as he felt. In mid air he clapped spurs to his horse, who answered with a twist and landed half a foot beyond the treachery. The pace was beginning to tell. The fox was running up hill and the hounds, flagging a little, were swarming steadily behind. At the top of the hill he ran to earth in a bank, and the hounds in a furious state of mind settled angrily round his retreat.

One after another the riders rode straggling up,

with streaming faces and steaming horses. There was a general blowing of noses, snuff-taking, and sipping of brandy. The brilliant run had come to an end, it being contrary to the good old laws of the pack to dig out a gallant fox.

After half-an-hour of amiable scandal-mongering among the ladies and gentlemen, and when the horses, with their noses to the wind, had had time to cool, the hounds were trotted off and cast in the likeliest shaw, everyone hopelessly praying for such another fox.

As the wintry afternoon was drawing to a close, and a bar of yellow light shone in the west among the driving grey clouds, the members of the hunt gradually left the hounds, to take that trial to nerve and temper—a long ride home, over roads infernally bad, with mud often above the fetlock, and a horse too tired to answer to the bit.

Mr. Whythiham was obliged to hurry on as fast as possible, and, with a little pressure from his knees and an encouraging voice, was urging his horse along at about four miles an hour, for he had invited some of the gentlemen to

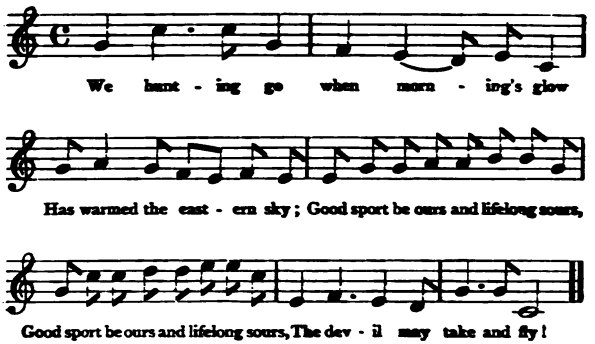
enjoy the hospitality of his house in the way of supper.

The dining-room of the Priory was large, hung with tapestries stretched on frames and representing, in shades of blue, green, and yellow, woodland landscapes in which figured deer, wild boar, hares, peacocks, herons, and smaller water fowl. Over the mantelpiece were trophies of antlers and two sets of wild boar tusks mounted in the form of a crescent, each pair being held together in the centre by a collar of silver. A ponderous carved oak sideboard was at one end of the room, and at the other a heavy serving table and a large wine cooler, of the form known as the sarcophagus.

The candles were lighted in the silver branches along the table, the scent of food and wine pervaded the room, and the gentlemen had enjoyed an extraordinarily eatable supper.

Captain Snouque, who was the voice of most parties, was on his legs shouting a song to an old and common tune:

SONG—We Hunting go.



They draw the cover,
The heart flows over
To see the hounds display.
A shout, a shout,
The fox is out
And through the wood and away.

And down the wind,
Not far behind,
We follow in full cry,
The pack now sails
With waving tails
And fence and ditch we fly.

Oh now sit tight,
With all your might;
Now ride and trust your luck.
It's not the stick

That does the trick,
But steady hands and pluck.

We hunting go,
When morning's glow
Has warmed the Eastern sky.
Good sport be ours,
And life-long sours
The devil may take and fly.

All the gentlemen that could stand, rose to join in the last verse, the others sang as well as they could from their chairs, and the glasses rattled, and the candles flicked as the song closed with a score of wild halloas, attuned for the open country.

Sir Thomas Calangay remained standing after everyone else had sat down, and began:

"Gentlemen—"

"Hear, hear," some one called.

"Gentlemen," he began again.

"Hear, hear, hear," was shouted in reply from some of his friends, smiting the table to give him a start.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I want to tell you what a happy day I've had."

Sir Thomas Calangay sat down on his chair

suddenly and heavily, and being left to himself fell softly asleep, and presently slipped silently beneath the shelter of the table.

Every man having refreshed himself with more wine for the good of his throat, there was a hum of talk. Captain Snouque was asking his friends within earshot :

" How do you spell devil ? "

The spellings in reply were various, but more or less in the approved manner.

" Well," said Captain Snouque, " I may be wrong, but I always spell devil, s—i—l—k—h—a—t. I've been taught many things, but my own personal tuition teaches me to spell devil—'silk hat.' What does the public say ? "

At the other end of the table, Mr. Gashier seated near Mr. Whythiham's right hand, was spouting small talk as a whale spouts water from an inexhaustible sea, and was now doing his hardest to get the old buffers to start a point to point steeplechase, from Kidbrook Church to Honeytown Spire. The men to be dressed in skirts and ride side-saddle, the women to ride astride in jack-boots

and long coats reaching to their ankles, and he laying about any amount of money to anyone who would take him, that he would beat the lot.

A slight commotion occurred now. One gentleman had set fire to another's wig, a fierce and playful piece of sport, and hardly had the disagreeableness of singeing evaporated, with help of snuff and more wine, than Mr. Johnnie Vanderbyntckes, who had been staring in the air for some time, asked his neighbour:

"Did it ever strike you that the ceiling was not quite even?"

"I would rather not look, for fear I should begin to doubt," was the reply.

The other men had caught the remark.

"Thinks the ceiling is falling, confound him!"

"Thinks the ceiling is falling!" was the general exclamation as they all looked up to the groining.

"Let's put him in the wine cooler, drat him, to find his wits," they roared, and with a hue and cry, without more ado, they seized Johnnie Vanderbyn-

tckes, doubled him up, stowed him into the sarcophagus, and after two or three of them had sat on the lid, turned the key. There was a plea for mercy from inside the sarcophagus. The men shouted with laughter, and Mr. Whythiham, fearing murder, stepped up to interfere, and was promptly met with the butt-end of two or three decanters, the wine streaming out on to the floor.

"You'll kill the man," said Mr. Whythiham, "open the sarcophagus or I'll knock you down."

The men shouted with laughter. Mr. Whythiham neatly executed his threat, and knocked the tipsy idiots down one after the other by a firm blow in the waistcoat. They forgot all about Vanderbyntckes, and sat and rolled on the floor, squabbling over the empty decanters. Mr. Whythiham, opened the wine-cooler with difficulty, pulled out the crushed, pallid, half-unconscious guest, and did his best to shake him into shape and make him safely intoxicated.

Mrs. Whythiham and Helena were in the sitting-room listening to the uproar in the dining-

room, while, as the hour drew towards midnight, one gentleman after another was carried out dead-drunk, to be carted home in the only two Sedan-chairs available. Mr. Whythiham never lost his head, indeed he had been known to drink most people in the neighbourhood off theirs, and when he had seen the collapsed guests safely carried from the house, and had counted the remaining bottles of wine unopened, and put them into the sarcophagus, he went coolly and comfortable to bed. In the dead of the night Mr. Whythiham woke suddenly, fancying that he heard Mrs. Whythiham call from her room.

"Emma, my love, did you call," he said, sitting up in bed.

"Childebert, I heard a noise."

"The dickens you did. Rats, or the ghost," said Mr. Whythiham, sinking back on to his pillows.

"No, Childebert," said Mrs. Whythiham, appearing in the doorway, wrapped in a dressing *sacque* and wearing a quilted hood of white lace

for fear she should take cold, "I distinctly heard a noise—listen!" she said, holding up her finger.

"The deuce," said Childebert, feeling less and less inclined to turn out of bed; when a sound that was certainly neither rats nor the ghost broke on his ear—it was—"Hang it, the drawing of a cork!" he exclaimed, and he was out of bed in a trice, slipped into his coat and waistcoat, and pulling his his sword out of the sheath, with bare legs and flying shirt tails he ran along the gallery and down the stairs to pink the marauder. "Those bottles," he muttered to himself, "are worth a guinea a-piece, and to be poured down gullets that can't even taste beer they are so weather-strung! Good God. I would like to make 'em richly drunk for a treat."

Mrs. Whythiham, armed with the poker, was patrolling the gallery by the balusters, whispering, "Childebert! don't be rash."

"Go to bed, Emma you fool," he shouted, quite forgetting the gentry he was to surprise. He threw open the dining room door and plunged into the room. Two candles only, with great forethought, were lighted among the half-burnt pieces in the candle-

branches: those infernal servants had left the table uncleared, and the men in possession, with half-blackened faces, were helping themselves to fag ends of game pie and the rinsings of Burgamot punch. Two were down with the French brandy—Mr. Whythiham thanked his stars he never got drunk—and two were pulling the corks from the wine in the sarcophagus, evidently tasting all the way round. "Gentlemen of the road," said Mr. Whythiham, "how is it you came here?"

"We come in through the window," said one of the challenged.

"You'll go out through the window," he said. The men stared at him. "Eat a good supper," he added, "leave the plate, and don't get too drunk or you'll get legged in the morning. Good night, gentlemen all," and Mr. Whythiham left the room, closed the door, locking it on the outside, to go up-stairs to assure Mrs. Whythiham that everything was quite safe, and no one need be alarmed. He slept like a top till eight o'clock the next morning, and never heard another word concerning the entertainment of the marauders.

CHAPTER V.

The society of the watering place of Kidbrook was in a pleasing state of stimulation. A notable bigwig, a rural dean, the nephew of a bishop, and a singularly clever man, as nephews of bishops not unfrequently are, had undertaken to give a lecture and discourse about nothing in particular for the benefit of local benevolences. At about three o'clock in the afternoon, just when everyone had been fortified by a substantial meal to a condition of intellectual patience, the password charity being a bait that attracts, the ladies were seen tripping in threes, in twos, and in half-dozens through Fore Street to the Assembly Rooms.

It may have been observed that men do not much affect charity lectures, and prefer, for the sake of

well-doing, to pay their money gratuitously, not receiving even slight useful information in a lecture by way of a moderate recompense.

The long, narrow room appropriated smelt of scrubbed boards, still damp, of dust, and lime-wash and old brooms. The rustling dames and dear young ladies took row after row of ticketed chairs. There was a fluttering of fans, a pleasant ripple of politely-whispered conversation, a nodding, and bowing, and smiling : the world was in good humour.

The great Lady Calangay sat on the centre chair in the front row, encircled by suitably selected acquaintances of her ladyship's individual choosing, a wave of her fan being to almost any lady a favour not to be neglected. It was said that her maid had been in the room ever since one o'clock in order to secure the seat becoming to her ladyship's state.

That perplexingly-uppish woman, Mrs. Whythiham, was also in the front seats, wearing an expression that might be read "no connexion with Lady Calangay," and charming Helena was seated

by her mother chatting to her friend Harriet Barmondsay, a fine young woman of rather boldish manners.

A side-door opened, and a gentleman shambled nervously across the platform, and stood, as it were, to take shelter behind a narrow, uneven white-wood table.

There was at once a straightening of backs, a covert wiping of lips with lace pocket-handkerchiefs, a pinching and twitching of capes and kerchiefs, a pressing and pluming, and the ladies, having attended to their toilets, were able to afford a divided attention to the unhandsome appearance of the Rural Dean.

"He must be a noble-looking gentleman without his wig," said one lady.

"Tush!" was the reply, "I have heard that no respectable man ever wears one to-day."

All further comment was silenced. The Rural Dean began:

"Nothing is so interesting to us, ladies, as man. My lecture, ladies, will be on man, his peculiarities and his position. You will have remarked that man

is imitative, he always apes those who suppose themselves to be his betters."

Lady Calangay smiled in conscious approval.

"He aspires. Man, who considers himself, and rightly, to be a most marvellous being, does not stand so high in the scale of marvellous construction as the bat, who lives chiefly like ourselves —behind gutterpipes."

The Rural Dean, who had a tumbler of simple water to refresh himself from time to time, now partook of the clear beverage.

"Are we," he continued, "ascending the scale towards the marvellous construction of the bat? Look how man to-day prefers to congregate behind rows of gutterpipes covering houses, streets, towns, cities, instead of living in forests, in the open country, as was his habit. Have the bats persuaded us to make gutterpipes for their convenience? Are there more bats than there were yesterday? Ladies, in surveying the forms of nature has it ever struck you that man in structure something resembles the group of animals styled apes? Nature, you must admit,

is stronger than any chain of argument. Now, for example, take a baboon, shave him, comb his hair, dress him in silk stockings, kneebreeches, coat, hat, and powder. What is he? Something resembling a man. Take a gentleman, divest him of his clothes, leave him unshorn, uncombed, unpowdered, turn him into the woods for a month, behold he will out-baboon the baboon and out-gorilla the gorilla, showing that, even as a monkey, man belongs to a superior breed. To take some instances, there is the chimpanzee, a small and active being, devoted to its own home interests, a preserver of its hearth, usually situate in a tree, as our hearths are not unusually situate in a family tree; rich in family, a keen hunter and provider of food for his household, he is remarkable for cleverness in secreting stores against the privations of Winter. The next we will take is the gorilla, of nobler form, more nearly allied, dear friends, as I have shown, to ourselves. He is large, muscular, given to much personal exercise. His frame is larger than man's, although the bones of some men have been found larger than his."

The Rural Dean took a little more water, and, clearing his throat, added :

"He also is devoted to domestic interest, and in accordance with the laws we preserve, two male gorillas will freqently engage in mortal combat, for the sake of a lady. Beauty requires such sacrifices. The parents are devoted to their children, with whom, as soon as they are grown up, they fight in much the same way as is done all over Europe. These, ladies, are a few parallels. Now, the lowest form of man is supposed to be a Bushman. He lives in holes scooped in the earth and has a language unintelligible to any known grammarian, composed, it is said, of a series of seemingly inarticulate grunts. The curious and tranquil savage, so unknown to ourselves who enjoy the treacherous terrors of our refined civilization. Yet man is singularly distinguished from all other creatures wandering in the wilds of this planet earth. He has his own marked morality, in that he is purposely, often unfairly, cruel towards his fellows. Man, in his high and elaborate condition of instructed cultivation, has been known

to roast his fellows in red-hot stone bulls, to drown them wholesale in neat contrivances, to smoke them at stakes, to torture them with implements, drugs, and maladies in methods such as only a low condition of intelligence would have conceived or executed."

The Rural Dean lectured for about an hour-and-a-half to an attentive audience, and after a slight pause at the close, said :

" The conclusive point of my lecture, ladies, is to ask you, is man an ape or not? "

Here the great Lady Calangay rose from her seat. It was supposed she had prepared herself to make a reply. Turning partly towards the audience and partly towards the Rural Dean, with honeyed manner, she said :

" Ladies, let me thank the company for being present, and Mr. Dean, they all have, I am sure, accepted the beneficent learning of your teachings."

Every lady's head rose suddenly quite an inch higher, and the most devoted subservient to her ladyship's wishes winced at the courteous and

wholesale assumption of rights. A rush of conversation flooded the room, and the ladies one and all rose and pressed diligently towards the door, leaving Lady Calangay at the middle seat in the front row, amazed, and actually the last. Never before had she been in a position where way had not been left for her, or made. As the audience crowded to the outer door the pattering of heavy rain occasioned exclamations of dismay. The fine frocks, the elegant hats, the dainty shoes, were useless as personal coverings in a shower. Some ladies hoped the bearers would have the sense to hawk the Sedan chairs, and others at once began to throw a pocket handkerchief with great care over the head-dress, and to turn the skirt up wrong-side out, gathering it round the waist. Who should be outside with splashed stockings and damp hair, armed with an umbrella, and struggling to keep the shoving servants from the doorway, but Mr. Gashier. A rain shower was an opportunity of ingratiation, and he had at once bolted from the shelter of Brown's to stand outside the Assembly Rooms on the pavement, in a ruining downpour.

He had been overtaken by Captain Snouque, unequipped for such an enterprise, who, however, by paying a guinea to Lady Calangay's three footmen had purchased the hire of her ladyship's umbrella, the men being agreed to have forgotten it and brazen the domestic thunderstorm. Mr. Whythiham's servant had already been bought by Mr. Gashier to lose himself in the crowd. As the foremost ladies' smiling faces appeared in the doorway, the pretty dears in front trying to keep a footing on the doorsill, and the pretty dears behind doing their polite best to push them into the wet street as fast as possible, Mr. Gashier and Captain Snouque maintained an advanced position, each alert, each ready to plunge for Mrs. Whythiham.

Mrs. Whythiham happened to be on the side of of the doorway nearer to Mr. Gashier, and what could he do but offer the escort of his arm and his umbrella? Captain Snouque, on the other side, offered his services about one minute too late. Recognising him as the better man of the two, Mrs. Whythiham begged him to favour her by

taking every care of Helena, her servant, since he was not to be seen in the crowd, having neglected to attend upon her. For once Mr. Gashier regretted having been the first in the field, feeling infinitely provoked that he had not left the honour of Mrs. Whythiham's arm to Snouque. Under the shelter of the enormous umbrella, planned expressly for the circumference of Lady Calangay's skirt, Captain Snouque offered his arm to Helena, who, resting her finger tips on the edge of his sleeve, found, as they walked along the dripping street, that he took such large regulation paces she could hardly keep step. While Captain Snouque said to himself, as he steadied the umbrella, "Money or no money, she is a charmingly sage girl. It is delightful to feel her fingers on the edge of my sleeve, and, confound it, I believe my heart is actually beating." No other gentlemen were standing in the rain to offer umbrellas, and the ladies could not do other than remark the romantic devotion and forwardness. Indeed they one and all foresaw, with their wonderful perspicacity, a Mr. Whythiham No. 2 in Mr. Gashier, and in Captain Snouque a son-

in-law to command in order to remove Helena from the parental premises. Their minds were recalled to the doorsteps of the Assembly Rooms by an uproar occasioned by Lady Calangay, who had pushed her own way to the front, roundly abusing her footman on account of the missing umbrella, and twenty umbrellas were at once humbly proffered for her ladyship's august selection. The afternoon's news flew to Brown's Coffee Rooms. Here was a pretty kettle of fish for Mr. Whythiham, who, as soon as he appeared in his domestic circle, relieved his emotion and took vengeance by declaring that the Rural Dean, after his discourse, went to Brown's, and doubled the charitable proceeds by playing Blind Hookey, spending the greater part of his winnings on relays of rum and water and toasted cheese. Helena laughed, Mrs. Whythiham thought it too rash a tale, and Mr. Whythiham, taking a pinch of snuff, felt a cheerful satisfaction.

CHAPTER VI.

The Spring sunshine played through the windows on to the pink and blue walls of the sitting room. Mrs. Whythiham and Helena were seated at an open card-table, busy in making artificial flowers for posies for their hats and dresses. The floor was littered with snippets of coloured tissue papers, which Bianco, the Maltese dog, was prettily trying to tear and devour, in spite of Helena's cautionings, endearments, and fanciful cuffings. The table was covered with requisites for the art of flower-making: packets of long wire of varied finenesses, tufts of soft white wool for modelling into the urn-shaped calyx, before being covered with green paper moistened in rice-water. A spirit lamp, a circular silver wire frame, having

a long handle, for holding the wax while it was gently heating to the degree when it could be moulded without danger of cracking or breaking. There were papers of all shades, parcels of colours in fine powders, cases of stamens and anthers, boxes of circular sheets of white wax, gum arabic, essences. There were boxwood instruments of many forms, for moulding, smoothing, impressing the wax on paper, and paint brushes with which to touch the anthers with pollen and trace the markings on the petals. Scissors, long, thin, curved, minute, wire pinchers and tweezers. Before these solid preparations for an outlay of work Mrs. Whythiham and Helena were indulging in a quiet argument.

"Take a pale pink rose," said Mrs. Whythiham. "It is an emblem of beauty and wisdom."

"I would rather not," said Helena. "Blue is, I think, better, but nemophila is so hard to make, and salvys are too ragged."

"Blue flowers, when natural, rarely stand the strain of candlelight with success," said her mother, looking up from the twist of wool, wire, and green paper she had been fashioning. "Try carnations."

"Forget-me-nots are too trifling," said Helena, without giving attention, "and then they are so silly."

"Try carnations and forget-me-nots," said Mrs. Whythiham, stretching out her thin hand to take some red and blue paper, to exhibit the becoming contrast.

I think not," said Helena, musingly. "Perhaps it is a pink rose after all—a China rose—three China roses opening in the loose petals," and she drew the pink paper towards her, while her mother began cutting out the green leaves. The conversation inclined to the favourite flowers of their numerous acquaintances. Lady Calangay's, they thought, should be a royal yellow, but every flower seemed too simple and old-fashioned to meet with her ladyship's new dignity. Harriet Barmondsey's, Helena said, was a tulip, and was confidingly informed in return that Mr. Whythiham's was a heart's-ease, though one might have supposed it was stinging-nettle. Mrs. Whythiham's was the dark violet, and then she maliciously questioned what could be the favourite flower of that uncommon

Mr. Gashier. Helena said she thought it might be the brown gilly-flower. Mrs. Whythiham declared that to be too sweet-scented and homely, a hot-house plant, with a new latin name, from the Indies, would be more preferred.

"How perversely dull it must be," said Helena, thoughtfully, "to live with people who care only for plants no one can have. Captain Snouque's favourite flower, for I heard him say so, is a blushing white moss-rose. If," she added, innocently, "I had to spend my life with anyone, I should rather choose Captain Snouque. He is so amazingly amusing. Mr. Gashier talks all about nothing but himself, and if I venture an attempt to say one word for anyone else, he responds with the best of manners, changing the conversation back again to dominant 'G.'"

"What can be more interesting to Gashier than Gashier?" said Mrs. Whythiham. "I never heard that the family had inter-married with anyone else, so what can you expect?"

Helena was modelling rose petals in the soft palm of her hand, and Mrs. Whythiham became absorbed

in twining green leaves on a stem. In the silence that overtook this engaging work, Mr. Whythiham came fresh from his morning walk, and loaded with that honey of the human busy-bee—the newest news. A rush of outer air seemed to pervade the room as he began to detail, according to report, the most famous dishes at the most famous dinner of the night before. "But," he said peevishly, "most of the guests were women—women," he added, "whose god is the mode, not their stomachs, for they esteem it ill-bred to have an appetite. You might as well offer a pearl to a pig, as a carefully-seasoned dish to a well-dressed woman. She never thanks you for it, and rarely finds it more than nice. "Helena, what are you making?" he said, coming up to the table. "Roses! Why don't you wear willow sprigs? Remember your arms are three willow wands, feuilled proper, erect, in chief, on a field argent. Some willow sprigs tied with a bit of white ribbon, worked with, 'I bend but break not,' would be, I fancy, quite a new thing among the gay ladies."

"As though," said Mrs. Whythiham," everybody

had not a coat of arms, and only a third of the world the impertinence to use it."

"To use a coat of arms, if you have it, is only right. The man or woman who will not annul their responsibilities. It is safer, Helena," Mr. Whythiham added, gracefully, "to be right."

"Half that is recognised as right to-day," said Mrs. Whythiham, "will be wrong to-morrow, and was wrong the day before yesterday. It is always right to please yourself. Helena, will you wear the willow or the rose?"

"Confound the beast," exclaimed Mr. Whythiham, making an impulsive movement towards Bianco, who, tired of munching paper, had begun to kill the *ennui* of being a domestic pet, by sucking the corner of Mr. Whythiham's hat. "Go, my love," he said, turning to his daughter, "and take Bianco for a walk; he wants a little occupation to repose his nerves."

Helena, leaving the pretty roses with a sigh, picked Bianco up in her arms, and as she left the room, scolded him affectionately for being an astounding worry.

"Helena is growing into a fine young woman," said Mr. Whythiham, with the tone of congratulation on his method of development. "And amiable, too, most amiable."

"Helena is a very charming girl," replied his wife.

Mr. Whythiham was looking out of window across the fields to the freshening sea. He began to walk up and down the room, poking his fingers and thumbs alternately into the deep pockets of his waistcoat.

"That fool of a Snouque," he began, irritably, "is becoming so dashed agreeable, I don't know how to keep the beggar at the end of my stick; I don't want to have anything to do with the penniless knave." He looked sharply at Mrs. Whythiham, who was peacefully making artificial flowers. "I intend," he said, wilfully, "that Gashier shall marry Helena. It shall be brought about, and if hook wont do it crook shall."

"Helena is my daughter as well as yours," said his wife, rising from her seat. "Her marriage is a matter that engages us both."

"D——n!" exclaimed Mr. Whythiham, with peremptory astonishment, standing still. "I believe if the truth were known, ma'am, she is more yours than mine."

"With such a frank admission, may I claim the absolute distribution of her person and her properties?"

"You're a fool, Emma; you're a fool. A pair of scissors couldn't match you for cutting two ways at once. Gashier will become our son-in-law; he can live with us; he has plenty of money to help maintain the house; and when we are run to earth, he can help take care of Helena."

Mrs. Whythiham scorned the plan, and said, "Is he a man to trust in Childebert?"

"You're no judge of a man, or you would never have saddled yourself with me," replied her husband, hotly.

"Now, Childebert, I give you fair warning, that if you are going to cheat me, I shall do my best to outstrip you in the noble art of taking one another in."

"I intend to have my way," said Mr. Whythiham, doggedly.

"If you preserve the balance," replied his wife, "I shall, rigorously, but if you play false you shall be swindled without blinking."

"I'll take my stick to you, if you do not mind what you are about," said Mr. Whythiham, incensed, as in stepping forward, he raised his Malacca cane, threatening his wife.

"My dear, hit where you will; strike the hand or the heart. Can you," she added, with unflinching calmness, "find anything contemptible for a man to strike the creature he thankfully admits to himself and the world as his social, physical, and mental inferior, his nobler half? Were our daughter here, sir, it would hardly be a pleasing advocacy to her to adopt the position of marriage."

"I'm going to Brown's," said Mr. Whythiham, turning sharply away and picking up his hat, feeling that, under the circumstances, it was more discreet to leave the lava bed to cool.

Mrs. Whythiham, being alone, sat down, smoothed her forehead with her handkerchief, and, bending over the card-table, finished the three China roses for Helena.

CHAPTER VII.

A scent of violets and other delights floated from every garden, primroses were in full flower in copse and hedgerow, the cowslips were already coming up in the fields along the edge of the river, and the thin blades of the waterflags were springing unsheathed from the brown close-cropped roots of the year before. Mrs. Whythiham and Helena were taking Bianco for his daily necessary gentle exercise, and as they followed the path by the river, they were enjoying the beauty of the season and the pleasing atmosphere of the morning. Bianco, being a harmless little dog, not given to chasing sheep or terrifying poultry, was at liberty to roll on the grass, to loiter, or to explore in advance the pathway and the adjoining lanes.

Wandering some distance from his mistress, he came upon some ducks peacefully sunning themselves on the grass near a sheltering hedge, and they, surprised at the abrupt appearance of a hairy, well-toothed monster, sprang to their feet and waddled, flustered and hustling, to the water. Bianco pursued, barking the terrors of attack. In they plunged, flapping and quacking, and too excited to consider where he was, Bianco, almost before he knew, plunged after them.

Helena, seeing the dear pet take a flying leap and a splash into the midst of the swimming ducks, ran forward calling to him, and picking up her skirt, rushed into the river to save the darling from being drowned in the current. Before Mrs. Whythiham could reach the spot, Helena had waded up to her waist trying to catch Bianco in her arms, or seize his ears, his tail, his hair, anything to take hold of.

At the end of a lane that had a full view of this aspect, a gentleman was seated on horseback applauding the incident, and much too interested in the predicament to dream of moving.

A commanding and anxious cry of: "Helena! Helena be careful!" warned him to action.

Mr. Gashier left the saddle, ran down to the bank, and saying, "Madam, allow me," was in the water offering his hand to help Helena, who now held Bianco tucked under one arm.

Mr. Gashier felt that he would have gone in up to his neck to be able to tell Snouque that he had put his arm round Miss Whythiham's waist.

The panting Helena was led to land, and in spite of the offer of a horse and the desire to fetch a carriage, Mrs. Whythiham thought it was wholesome to walk to the Priory as fast as possible.

A lady in a dripping skirt, a gentleman wet up to his middle, leading a horse, an anxious and something angry mother, and a draggled Maltese dog were unsuitable figures for the bright sunshine, the shining river, and the flower-scattered fields.

What could be more natural than that the next day Mr. Gashier should call to enquire, and learn that Miss Whythiham had taken cold, with a

swollen face, and was invisible, as ladies in such circumstances always are, to human eyes.

Whoever yet saw a lady with a swollen face, except those nobodies — the doctors and the dentists?

This was distressing news for Mr. Gashier, who went down to Brown's to gather fortitude from a consoling spirit, and tell fearful tales to gaping listeners, of poor Miss Whythiham's devotion to her dog, of his own happy rescue, of her sad illness, and how she had, in fact, taken her death of cold.

When he persistently repeated that he had done a mere nothing, but few believed him, and he became a hero, not of the hour, but of at least nine days.

"Such a good liar," said Captain Snouque to himself, as he stood watching, "you might almost swear he was telling the truth."

He drew nearer to the group of audience, who sat, stood, or lolled over one another's chairs in yawning idleness, to be diverted by a changing tale. Mr. Gashier, who had been

soothing his tired sensibilities with a beverage of united port and Curaçoa, had so exhilarated his imagination that the men at Brown's finally understood Miss Whythiham to be actually dying, and most of them declared a sorrow that such a pretty girl, with such a pile of stivers, should be good for nothing but the churchyard.

Captain Snouque dashed the powder from his hair and grew a trifle pale. He felt that he cared something for Helena, and at the notion of her dying, winced.

"Ah!" said Mr. Gashier, "in other countries they take the sack and a brick for their wives and daughters, but here it is always a doctor's certificate."

"You don't mean to say you think Whythiham would kill his daughter?" they all exclaimed with indignation.

"Who is to say what Whythiham would not do?" said Mr. Gashier. "It is so deuced stupid of 'em to let her take cold. Nobody ever gets into their grave without being helped. If they are not regularly shoved into it decently, they always have a

leg down. Why, what do you think they pay the doctors and the parsons for, if it isn't to paste up the cracks and tell everybody it couldn't be avoided, and so wasn't anybody's fault. That's one reason why they pay for a funeral sermon. When a man dies I'm hanged if the doctors and the parsons and the undertakers don't send in bills of claim on his estate. If I were an heir, I wouldn't pay one halfpenny of such demands, because the goods for deceased—pills and coffins—were certainly never for me, and no dead man would ever pay, I'll bet a guinea. They batten on corpses, the beasts. If there were none of that sort, I don't, upon my life, believe any one of us would ever die. If a doctor does by accident let his fox go and cures his patient, it is only that he who pays and runs away will live to die—is it die or pay?—I don't know, hang it—will live to die another day."

"But I was just going to tell you," said Mr. Gashier, whose j's and g's were growing unintelligibly congenial, "how ungrateful it is of Miss Whythiham, to go and die now. If they would

leave her alone she would live, if it were only for me pulling her out of the river. Just, too, when old Whythiham is beginning to offer a fellow a paw, to give the leading card, and leave the best moves open. It is too bad of that girl to go and get ill and die." Mr. Gashier became almost tearful. "So ungrateful after all I have done for her, standing out in the rain at a mission meeting, and going to a sewing party. I went to a sewing party for her sake—I did. Snouque, you remember how you found me at the sewing party. Women always are ungrateful !" he sighed, desperately.

Captain Snouque thought it time to interfere. "Ah, Gashier," he said, condolingly, "I dare say if you were a Duke she would remember you, there are so few Dukes."

"Dukes," said Mr. Gashier, hanging on to the word. "People who keep sort of tail feathers to put on occasionally, and in the natural walks of life look like any other fowls. Is it fools or fowls—confound it ! My grief, gentlemen, you must excuse me. Any fool can make a Duke. I shall never offer any of 'em a patent of nobility for

serving me. It is nothing but a rascally monopoly of the Crown," he said, hotly. "When one House overtops another, the winning side immediately pays a lot of new Dukes to blow their trumpets—the wind-suckers—and paint their genealogy for 'em up to modern times. I shall reward my troopers with trifling guarantees of honesty and let 'em be."

"Try another glass Gashier, try another glass," said his friends, kindly helping him.

"I think I will," said Mr. Gashier, smiling faintly.

"I feel as though I wanted another." Another glass of port and Curaçoa was too much even for Mr. Gashier, who fell forward on to the table; and his friends, folding his hands beneath his head—when he, muttering, begged them to regard his lace frills—left him in the arms of sleep.

"What a treat for old Whythiham," thought Captain Snouque, as he turned away to stare out of the window at the rolling sea and damp brick pavement. "If I wasn't such a penniless devil I should press forward. There is always to-morrow.

Perhaps the preference is mine. If the girl lives —by Jove! we shall see." He took up the thin sheet of the Gazette and amused himself with reading news that for him had no interest.

CHAPTER VIII.

Miss Whythiham recovered from the chill of the river, and Mr. Gashier's pathetic mournings were altered to an appearance of sleek jollity.

The happy change took place but just in time for an event of the district, a birthday party given by Mr. and Mrs. Barmondsey for the social advertisement of their daughter Harriet. There were then in Kidbrook but two Sedan-chairs to be had. The ladies and gentlemen had to walk to evening parties, or to hire or borrow the coveted conveyances, since only persons who had to come several miles to an entertainment thought of driving in a coach as a matter of pleasure after dark.

Mrs. and Miss Whythiham had been so fortunate

as to secure the two Sedans, and stepped into their chairs punctually, in spite of all Mr. Whythiham's iusulting prognostications that women were certain to be late. Indeed, they left him in his dressing jacket, with his hair but half-powdered, his time having been so much engaged in criticising the family toilets, and in assisting his wife and daughter to be ready for the minute named.

The bearers trotted off with their burden, each chair being preceded by a man with a lanthorn hung from a stick much like a shepherd's crook.

Mrs. Barmondsey's house was brightly lighted, the rooms leading into one another were thrown open, and on a moveable carved oak stand, placed for the time in a corner of one of the rooms, a group of musicians were ready to perform the charming airs of the popular dances.

Mrs. Whythiham was dressed in mauve silk, with a train of three yards, over a white satin petticoat, with an apron of superb point, and Helena wore white, with the three China

roses as a posy on the edge of her bodice. The other ladies and gentlemen were dressed in more colours than the rainbow holds, and the brilliant company was well appointed and gay. The other ladies were conversing apart, forming, no doubt, deep plots for the pairing of partners ; the younger ladies while chattering were listening to fresh-dished small talk.
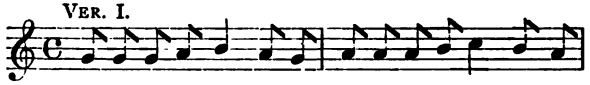
Harriet Barmondsey declared that while Mr. Gashier was asleep over wine Captain Snouque had shaved his head, and not all the balms of the barbers could make his hair grow in less than a month, so he had to wear a wig, and she said that in one of the "contre-danse" she meant to pull the bow at the back and see if it would come off, This led many ladies' eyes to criticise Mr. Gashier's head, who fancied that their attentions must be because he had saved poor Miss Whythiham from drowning, and proudly realised that every woman petitioned his hand in the dance. The festivity of the evening was opened with the elegant solemnity of the minuet, some of the fathers and mothers, according to their prece-

dence, exchanging the graceful courtesies of the figures.
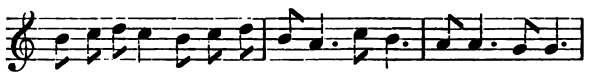
Many " contre-danses " followed, when every couple having danced up and down the rows of dancers, was at liberty to taste a brief repose, and to enjoy a little syllabub or chocolate before returning to the exercise of the evening and again taking their places in the dance for the benefit of those remaining. The gentlemen's hands touched the ladies' lightly, the ladies' hands trembled triflingly in the firmer grasp; the delicate music of the violin, the viol and the flute, floated over the heads of the merry company; the candles flickered and guttered; the air was warm; the ladies and gentlemen were becoming lightly flushed, and the evening, as an entertainment, was approaching the point success. Among the charming dances was the cushion dance. Those taking part stood in a circle and sang, moving slowly from right to left, the accompanying song, to a simple air:—

Cushion Dance.

VER. I.
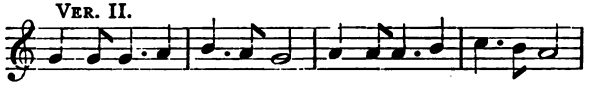


Oats, peas, beans, and bar-ley grows! You nor I nor no-body knows,

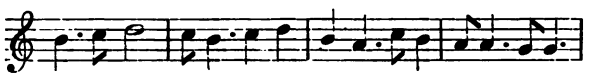


You nor I nor nobody knows How oats, peas, beans, and bar-ley grows.

VER. II.

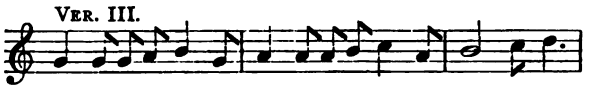


Thus the far-mer sows his seeds; Thus he stands and takes his ease;
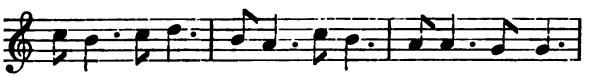


Stamps his foot and claps his hands, And turns a-round to view his lands.

VER. III.
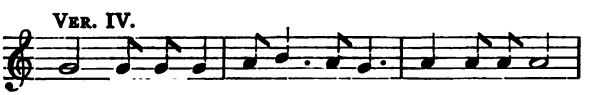


Wait-ing for a part-ner, Wait-ing for a part-ner; Open the ring

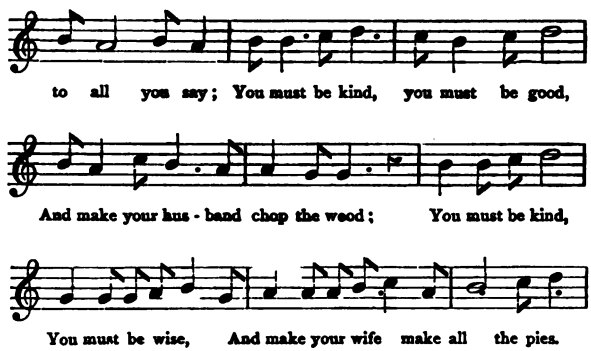


and take one in, And kiss her when you've got her in.

VER. IV.



Now you are married you must o-bey; You must be true



A gentleman stood in the centre, holding a cushion, the dancers stopped moving, while they sang, "Waiting for a partner," and the gentleman laid the cushion at the feet of the lady he preferred, then picking the cushion up, and taking her hand, he led her into the centre of the ring, where they both knelt on the cushion face to face, while he raised the finger tips of her right hand to his lips. The dancers then began to move as before, singing, "Now you are married you must obey." The couple in the centre rose, the gentleman leading the lady by the hand round within the circle, from left to right, until the close of the song, when he returned

to a place among the dancers, and the lady remaining in the centre was free to distinguish anyone she pleased by her choice with the cushion. Many couples had been chosen and dismissed, when Harriet Barmondsey chose, as a subject of amusement, Captain Snouque, to see what woman he would have the impertinence to offer the cushion to.

After glancing round the circle of dancers, as though in a state of very naturally confused difficulty, and making a false step forward, first towards one lady and then towards another, he at last laid the cushion with much hesitation, as though not quite determined after all, before Miss Whythiham. Helena laughingly held out her hand, and when he had led her into the middle, and was slowly touching the finger tips of the kneeling girl with his lips, a faint blush shot across the cheeks of both, much to the merriment of the dancing circle.

"Ah!" said Mr. Gashier to himself, with a dash of bitterness, "I would rather have half a Helena than fifty Harriets. That sugared ape shan't win."

But Helena returned Captain Snouque's com-

pliment with unflinching simplicity, to the disrelish of her father, the contentment of her mother, and the general tongue-wagging of the company ; the elder ladies regretting she should have been so indifferently reared as to countenance an insignificant choice, even sportively.

Mr. Gashier, full of malice, left the party early, piqued because he considered Helena too attracted to Snouque. By powers of money and persuasion he hired one Sedan-chair, and disguising himself as chairman, he impressed a comrade to take the other end of the poles. In the early morning, when the well-cloaked and hooded company, tired but delighted, was streaming from Mrs. Barmondsey's house, lighted by link boys and guided by lanthorns, Helena was safely shut up in the Sedan, and carried off. Mrs. Whythiham followed in the other Sedan, and on the way along the wide and silent road became uneasy, because, crane her neck as she would, she could not see any lights in front. She grew more and more anxious. There was actually no sign of the Sedan-chair which should have but just preceded her, and she

wished Childebert had not been reasonably economical in refusing to allow the carriage for so short a distance.

Arriving at the Priory, Helena was not there, and nothing had been seen or heard of the other Sedan.

On reflection, Mrs. Whythiham thought it might have been delayed, Mr. Whythiham having perhaps decided to walk beside the chair. In a few minutes Mr. Whythiham came home, alone. He had seen nothing of the Sedan, and frightened at some dastardly trick, he ran back to Mrs. Barmondsey's, and pushing through the crowd of boys with torches and lanthorns, met at the door, outlined on the blaze of light within, Captain Snouque, wrapped in his evening cloak.

Captain Snouque had neither seen nor heard of the Sedan, and in as great a fright as Mr. Whythiham, he tried to recollect where he had last seen Gashier—not for some hours. Mr. Whythiham was hotly making empty enquiries, and offering money for news.

In hasty council, he and Captain Snouque settled

to go to Mr. Gashier's lodgings; and in the street, lighted here and there with an ill-trimmed, dull-burning lamp, they pitched, being almost blind in the dark, headforemost, barking their shins, over the poles of the lost Sedan, standing deserted in the roadway.

"The scoundrel!" gasped Mr. Whythiham, picking himself up, and laying his hand on his sword, not feeling sure whether Snouque was playing tricks or not.

"Run to earth," said Captain Snouque; "shall I knock?"

The servants stated that Mr. Gashier was not yet come home, on which Mr. Whythiham, calling them a damned pack of paid knaves in open market, forced an entrance, and followed by Captain Snouque, flung open the first door he could lay his hands to. It was a parlour, well-lighted, and Mr. Gashier was blandly offering Helena, who was seated on a divan, a glass of noyeau and a macaroon, which she was in the act of refusing.

"Villain!" said Captain Snouque, contemptu-

ously, stepping forward and hitting Mr. Gashier's hand up, so that the noyeau was splashed on his face and jabot.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Whythiham, sternly, "an explanation."

Mr. Gashier, while daintily wiping the noyeau from his face, impudently explained that Miss Whythiham had been conveyed in the chair by Mr. Whythiham's orders, and that he had soothed her natural alarm by telling her it was wished she should remain for her father's arrival. He looked towards Miss Whythiham for her acquiesence.

Without a word, Mr. Whythiham, who never fought men in the presence of ladies, offered his arm to the pale and intimidated Helena, and leading her from the house, placed her in the Sedan. The bearers were not to be found, and any courtesy of Mr. Gashier's was not in requisition, so he and Captain Snouque, slinging the straps over their shoulders, carried the stolen lady safely home, along the lonely streets and silent roadways, their swords clinking on the poles, their breath coming heavily with the unaccustomed exercise, and when

they fell out of step, the chair giving an uneasy lurch, exciting them to the muttering of strange oaths.

CHAPTER IX.

Mr. Gashier remained up for the rest of the night, and was much amused at the trick he had played to put to hazard the reputation of Mr. Whythiham and his daughter. After walking up and down his room, in much reflection, he thought it wiser to be before the world in every way, and sent a man to knock up his comrade in the joke, a Mr. Reynolds. When Mr. Reynolds, sleepy, unwilling, yet animated, arrived, Mr. Gashier explained to him the insult he had received from Captain Snouque, and the friends together framed a neat message to demand reparation by the sword. What but a duel could sew up the ravelled seam of discord? At seven in the morning Captain Snouque was still sleeping off the excitement of the night

before, when he was awoke by the announcement of a personal messenger from Mr. Gashier. Slipping on his clothes, and still half awake, he received Mr. Reynolds' in his bedchamber, who, exchanging the decent civilities respecting the weather and the morning, presented the challenge. Mr. Reynolds was a heavy gentleman, of about thirty, very ready to assist a friend, particularly those he considered superior friends, in the perpetration of a joke or a scandal, but uncommon shy at the edge of a sword, and given to taking leg-bail at the notion of blood. Chocolate had been served, which Mr. Reynolds uneasily sipped while waiting for Captain Snouque's answer, and being a man of peace, he hinted in a stream of apologetic nothings the wisdom of covering the lately offered insult with the silk handkerchief of humble extenuation. The honey-tongued endeavours were woefully misspent on Captain Snouque's sturdy morality.

He amiably accepted the challenge, cordially hoped Mr. Reynolds would approve the second he would present in the course of the day, and named

as suitable, if convenient, the following morning at half-past five, in the fields by Cotemathen.

Mr. Reynolds' under-lip fell; a joke was a joke, but to be in for a duel when the seconds might be called on to fight too, he felt a natural dislike—and as he was bowed from the room by Captain Snouque, smiled at the enemy with muscles weakening in misgiving.

Captain Snouque, having put his poor effects into some order, wrote two letters and gave them to his servant to send by the first post leaving. He then dressed carefully, and, it being afternoon, walked down to the Priory.

Mrs. Whythiham received him with the most delicate and reserved expressions of gratitude, and Helena, while toying with Bianco, spoke of Mr. Gashier's lies as a piece of practical fooling. What could be more delightful than the sunny sitting-room, the quiet, the women so undisturbed by the breaking of the world, enjoying, it seemed, a fair domestic peace. They spoke of the dance, the guests, the clothes, but the cushion dance remained unmentioned.

Sighing, Captain Snouque rose to go. His waistcoat felt exceedingly tight about the chest.

"Good-bye, Miss Whythiham," he said, holding out his hand.

"Good-bye," said Helena, charmingly. "I am so much obliged to you for helping to carry the chair."

"*Grand Dieu*," said Captain Snouque to himself, blowing his nose, as he left the house. He walked to Brown's, and played—unknown intemperance for Snouque—sixpenny whist for four hours. Not the faintest rumour of the approaching passage of arms had floated to the world of gossip, it being a point of honour to keep the matter secret till the affair was concluded.

Captain Snouque went home to bed, sleeping soundly until four o'clock the next morning, when he ate a heavy breakfast, and drank half a bottle of brandy to steady his hand. Fingering his sword affectionately, he praised the excellent and supple blade; there was no fear of false play there. It was long, keen-edged, and bright, with a coat of arms

engraved close to the hilt. The thought of Helena played across all other thoughts, and, pulling himself together, Captain Snouque rubbed his fingers over his eyelids, and hoped, by all the saints, that she might never fall to the lot of that Gashier. Cleansing the sword blade with a little olive oil, he clapped it into the sheath, and running down stairs met Mr. Johnnie Vanderbyntckes, who was his second, at the door.

The morning was cold, the sharpness of a May frost hung in the air, a white mist steamed along the surface of the ground, the birds were singing merrily, and the freshening scents of flowers and grasses foretold a lovely Spring day. The sun was topping the line of hills as they reached Cotemathen, and the mist was still three feet on the ground. Mr. Gashier and Mr. Reynolds were already there, and the gentlemen having wished one another good morning, Mr. Reynolds suggested an exchange of weapons, which neither Mr. Gashier nor Captain Snouque would countenance: Four swords' lengths having been carefully measured, the swordsmen took off

coat and waistcoat, that they might engage with greater ease in their shirts. Mr. Gashier was finely got up in cambric, trimmed with lace, and jabot ; and Captain Snouque wore rather coarse linen, with no frills or fancy stitchings. Mr. Reynolds, having taken the time by his watch, waved a handkerchief, and the play at once begun. Both gentlemen were well accustomed to the weapon, and fought with fair form, with the left arm hanging freely by the side. After the first four minutes, when the attention of both was becoming strained, Mr. Gashier made a sharp drive at the middle of his opponent's chest, and Captain Snouque, stepping backwards to strike the weapon up, slipped on the wet grass, receiving a wound in the left ribs. Captain Snouque threw down his sword, unwound the long silk sash which held his breeches in place, and with the help of Mr. Johnnie Vanderbyntckes, bound it over his ribs, to stop the bleeding, as tightly as it might be drawn. Mr. Reynolds had run off to fetch the Sedan-chair, in waiting at a quarter of a mile's distance, ready if it should have been

needed by Mr. Gashier; and Mr. Gashier, pallid, yet proud of his success, was standing, bending his sword backwards and forwards on the ground, wondering what the devil he was to do if he had killed Snouque. They helped Captain Snouque into the very Sedan that had carried Helena, and taking him to his lodgings, sent for Dr. Ripper.

Dr. Ripper was a man of medium size, with a remarkably benevolent aspect, white wig, and unusual beard, to veil the natural movements of his mouth. Dressed in black, with a distinct smell of Turkey rhubarb sticking to his clothes; he acted on the bold hypothesis that no one but himself knew anything. On looking at a patient his favourite rhyme, in the privacy of his enlarged mind, was:

"When folks are ill they send for me,
I purges, bleeds, or sweats 'em.
Sometimes they live, sometimes they die,
And I—I lets 'em."

Having felt Captain Snouque's pulse and looked at his tongue with proper professional gravity, he inspected the wound, which, with rash ignorance,

he insisted on bathing, and then, having tortured the unfortunate patient in order to exhibit his learned power, he bound it gently in some linen rags. But to heighten the effect of his profound profession it was necessary that the sufferer should be dosed with something or another, and with a smile of reassuring courtesy, he left the bedside, kindly promising to send a soothing potion. Dr. Ripper walked home, wondering what the deuce he was to send the fellow. He took up his well-thumbed volume of diseases and remedies, and closing his eyes, he turned it round and round two or three times, and opening it at random, took the first lines that attracted his sight. It happened to be an old remedy, arranged in Latin; a valuable and healing compound, composed of a decoction of edible seaweed and syrup of roses. This he unwittingly translated as tincture of iodine and rose water, which he mistook as sugar of lead, and having made the mixture, sent it as a remedy for all the ills of life to Captain Snouque. By the following morning, Captain Snouque was in a high fever, accentuated by

dysentery. Dr. Ripper looking at him, declared that with such a mortal wound it was only natural. Mr. Johnnie Vanderbyntckes remained faithfully by Captain Snouque's bedside.

" Ah, Vanderbyntckes!" said Captain Snouque, " most on 'em say look for the woman, but I say look for the damned rogue who shoves blame on anyone's shoulders rather than his own. You talk of humanity. It seems to me they are all enemies —did you ever have a friend, Vanderbyntckes? God protect me from my friends—I can save myself from my enemies. An enemy gives but death." He began to sing :—

" Civilization
Is vexation,
Barbarity as bad,
Humanity
Has puzzled me,
And some folks plagued me mad."

" Oh, Snouque!" said Mr. Johnnie Vanderbyntckes, feebly, " don't be so confounded funny."

" There's another, Vanderbyntckes :—

' It is the thing called duty,
Which some folks think a beauty,
But it seems to me
Is a rule of three
In the problem of humanity.'

" Vanderbyntckes, take care of Helena, she is a delightful woman ; " he paused, and then added, " I am going across the border. Death is the *bon bouche* at the bottom of the cup. We always save the best for the last." Gasping in exhaustion, he fell back on his pillow senseless. This condition was shortly after certified by Dr. Ripper, according to the lights of his common practice, as death. No efforts being made to restore Captain Snouque to consciousness, he, in the course of nature, actually died, and it was discreetly classified as death from natural causes.

CHAPTER X.

Mr. and Mrs. Whythiham were in the pink and blue sitting-room, and Mr. Whythiham, standing in the window, his short legs wide apart, was unfolding the single sheet of *Harvey's Kidbrook Argus*, but yet absorbed in ruminating thoughts of other things.

"My dear," he said, suddenly, in a tone of malicious playfulness, turning towards his wife, "Snouque is potted."

"Potted!" said Mrs. Whythiham, raising her eyebrows.

"Potted," Mr. Whythiham affirmed, dryly. "Gashier spiked him the other day in a silly duel, and now Ripper has finished the job. It is lucky for Gashier," he added, twitching his lips.

"The man is out of the way, and Ripper is to blame. I wouldn't be Ripper for something,"

"Is Captain Snouque dead, Childebert?" said Mrs. Whythiham, turning a little pale, and sewing more diligently than usual.

"As dead as a chap usually can be. I am looking to see if there is anything in the *Argus*. Not a word of the matter ever got wind till last night, when the undertaker let it out, and said he was poisoned. What d'ye think of that, eh Emma?" said Mr. Whythiham, laughing. "Think what a popular man—the undertakers quibbling over his corpse instead of being glad to get him. I wonder if there is anything here?" he muttered, glancing over the paper. "D——n my eyes!" he exclaimed angrily. "Just listen to this Emma. 'We regret to announce the death of Captain Harry Ursus Snouque, eldest surviving cousin and heir presumptive to the Duke of Dyke, who in a duel with one named Mr. Augustus Gashier was severely wounded, and died from the ensuing effects.'"

"I told you so," said Mrs. Whythiham, with the tranquil bitterness of superior knowledge.

"By Gad! what a cursed idiot I was," said Mr. Whythiham, scrunching the newspaper and throwing it to the floor.

"Never dreamed that that penniless ape was the Harry Snouque. There seem to be so many of 'em. Dash my stars! Well," he said, after a minute's pause for remorseful reflections; "Well," he repeated, in the sharp tones of a wronged man, "I am not going to have any more of this, Helena shall marry Gashier."

Mrs. Whythiham laid her needlework on her lap, and looked at her husband in cold and calm scorn, as though she pitied some poor wretch who had displayed a reprehensible weakness.

"Childebert," she began, in a firm, yet considerate voice—but there was an interruption. Helena came into the room gaily, airily holding a fine pink rose, and nibbling at its scented petals.

"Ah, Helena!" said Mrs. Whythiham, turning towards her, and anxious to be the first in the field. "There is some sad news my dear," she said, looking her steadfastly in the face, "Captain

Snouque is dead. He was killed by Mr. Gashier in a duel."

Helena, still nibbling the rose, thought of the Sedan-chair episode, thought of the cushion dance. Her mouth trembled a little in spite of her effort of control, two tears stole down her cheeks, tears she ignored and left to dry as they fell.

"What!" said her father, looking at her disdainfully, "all in the downs, Helena? Tears for penniless Snouque? Tie your hair up with a bow of crape; I have always heard it soothes the heart-ache! But shed tears for a fellow like that, who had not enough salt to eat his beef with! A woman should know how to control her feelings, especially," he added, sternly, "when she is my daughter."

Helena, without a word, picked the rose to pieces, petal by petal, and let them fall to the floor.

Mrs. Whythiham was silent.

"I cannot let the girl go off in the mopes like this," her father said to himself; "must get her married at once. I shall just make my own arrange-

ments with Gashier. You might have to wait for years after those tears, confound the Jezebel."

"Tears, my dear ladies," said Mr. Whythiham, "I cannot put up with from anyone. I suppose you will both cry yourselves ugly. How many tears will you shed for me I should like to know?"

Without more ado, he politely left the room and went down to Brown's, where he met Gashier, and politely condoled with him over the narrow escape of having to flee the country, and the sad news of Captain Snouque.

The sympathy was playfully parried by the pale and elegant Mr. Gashier remarking:

"It is a sad matter, but all is well that ends well."

Mr. Whythiham, with a marked kindness, engaged him in a game of double dummy, and lost many guineas to cheer his friend, persuading him to pluck up his spirits by a constant sipping of orange brandy.

The time seemed suitable, and Mr. Gashier's physical conditions ripe.

"Ah, Gashier," said Mr. Whythiham, sighing

and putting down the cards, "death makes us all think twice as to who will step into our shoes. I often think, when I leave mine vacant who the deuce will put 'em on. They are too big for Helena, and it seems to me the best thing I can do will be to get a husband to wear 'em for her. I don't know," he said, tentatively—"I may be mistaken," he added, seeing Mr. Gashier's flushed and now rather silly-looking face—"but ever since that night you were so attentive to her, carrying her off in the Sedan, I've surmised—er—vaguely fancied," he continued, taking a pinch of snuff, "you might have a lurking sort of tenderness for the girl."

Mr. Gashier stared at Mr. Whythiham's good-sized shoes and large silver buckles, and could hardly credit his ears. To hook this old jack so easily, without fly or fish, what could be the matter? It was better to play in than to be played out.

"You are quite right, Mr. Whythiham," he said, drawing himself into a position of dignity, and trying to look as much so as possible; "I"—he

was going to say adore, but chose a more suitable adjective—"I admire Miss Whythiham."

"Ah," said her father, "I had reason then to think so, and I can assure you your admiration is discerned; I believe, reciprocated, The noble girl is grizzling herself to pieces. Now, Mr. Gashier, since we are both of one mind, we had better draw up a little agreement. We will keep the matter private to ourselves until the Autumn, she is so young; and by Christmas, at latest, I shall hope to present you as my son-in-law."

Mr. Gashier was only too agreeable. He thought of the Priory, of the stables he would keep, of the wine parties he would give from those notable cellars, and of the heavy points he would give at play. Reynolds should be best man, and what a life they would lead 'em! The little agreement of betrothal without the lady's consent was signed by the two gentlemen, and Mr. Whythiham went home carrying a copy of the document in his breast pocket, thinking that he would soon manage the women, and slapping his leg in a mood of hearty approbation of his shrewdness. When he

went into the sitting-room, Helena had gone to bed with a bad headache, and Mrs. Whythiham was supposed to be reading. He looked at his wife keenly, and, amusing himself by languidly snuffing the candles, said :

" Emma, Mr. Gashier has made a proposal of his hand for Helena's."

" Helena will never marry Mr. Gashier," was the calm reply.

" We shall see," said Mr. Whythiham, tapping the table with the snuffers.

" After such a piece of business as this duel, Helena, if she is my daughter, will never receive Mr. Gashier, except in the most distant courtesy."

" We shall see, Emma, we shall see. I give her till the Autumn to make up her mind. After those tears I feel myself magnanimous."

" Grief," said his wife, " cannot be estimated. It is too deep to measure and too light to weigh, and tears are a woman's weapon, often deadly;" and tears shone in Mrs. Whythiham's eyes.

"Helena," said Mr. Whythiham, "is so pig-headed. She is one of those objectionable beings who make up their minds what they are going to do and not going to do before they are born, and then to us they are useless, my dear. I can never forgive you for breeding such an opinionated personage. Do you think a little lowering medicine might conduce Helena's reason to coincide with my views? It is wonderful how charitable some ladies may become."

"That," said Mrs. Whythiham, "might be a means not to be countenanced."

"She shall marry Gashier," said Mr. Whythiham, "like it or not like it. It is nothing to me what she likes. Is not an Englishman's house his castle? I shall do as I choose with who I choose. All is fair in love and war," said Mr. Whythiham, rubbing his chin with his hand.

"Meaning," said his wife, rising to leave the room, "that neither in war nor in love should you cheat."

CHAPTER XI.

Helena became ill, very ill, so ill that Mr. Whythiham grew uneasy for his contract of marriage, and Mr. Gashier feared the money bags might slip from beneath his finger tips. The doctors were grave; her delicate nerves were cruelly unstrung, a change of air might work a restoration. A travelling carriage was purchased, and with four servants and two maids and an extra carriage, they set out for the south of France, going by ship to Bordeaux. Long before the Autumn, Helena was dead. Nothing remains to point to the vanished life, but a bush of white lilac, which still waves above an almost forgotten tomb, in a cemetery in Provence. The ladies of Kidbrook, on hearing the news, and beholding the return of the

empty travelling-carriage, immediately held tea-parties for the furtherance of a profound exchange of every social why and wherefore, and in the murmur of gossip, it was whispered over tea-cups and hinted from behind fans that Mrs. Whythiham had poisoned her daughter, to save her from falling into the hands of a man justly esteemed a scoundrel, but, on the other hand, some thought Mr. Whythiham had a finger in the pie, to spite his wife.

THE END.

REMINGTON & COMPANY, Limited.
LONDON AND SYDNEY.

LIST OF

PUBLISHED & FORTHCOMING BOOKS

By COLONEL FRANCIS CORNWALLIS MAUDE, V.C., C.B.,
Who commanded the Artillery of Havelock's Column.

MEMORIES OF THE MUTINY.

With this is incorporated the personal narrative of JOHN WALTER SHERER, C.S.I., formerly Magistrate of Cawnpore. 2 Vols., demy 8vo, with Illustrations. Handsomely bound, 30/-; a small Edition on special paper, 52/6. Third Edition.

By JOHN ARTHUR BARRY, ("L.L.")

STEVE BROWN'S BUNYIP
AND OTHER STORIES.

With Introductory Verses by RUDYARD KIPLING.
1 Vol., crown 8vo., cloth, 3/6.

REMINGTON & CO.'s NEW BOOKS.

By MAJOR GENERAL STRANGE.

GUNNER JINGO'S JUBILEE,

(Reminiscences of old fighting days in the West Indies, India, and Canada.) With Illustrations. Handsomely Bound, 10/6. Just out.

By KENNETH MACKAY, Author of "Stirrup Jingles," &c., &c.

OUT BACK; an Australian Romance.

Crown 8vo., cloth, 3/6. Just out.

AMONG BOERS AND BASUTOS.

By Mrs. BARKLY.

Crown 8vo., cloth, 3/6. Second Edition.

By HUGH CONWAY, Author of "Called Back," etc., etc.

A CARDINAL SIN.

Crown 8vo., cloth, 3/6. Eighth Edition.

BOUND TOGETHER TALES,

By the Author of "Called Back."

Crown 8vo., cloth, 3/6. Ninth Edition.

By MARK TWAIN.

THE MARK TWAIN BIRTHDAY BOOK.

Cloth, gilt edges, 2/6. Eighth Edition.

By W. E. NORRIS.

MRS. FENTON,

A SKETCH.

Crown 8vo., cloth, 2/6. Third Edition.

By DOROTHEA GERARD, author of "Lady Baby," etc.

A QUEEN OF CURDS AND CREAM.

Crown 8vo., cloth, 3/6. Third Edition.

ETELKA'S VOW.

Crown 8vo., cloth, 2/6. Third Edition.

ON THE WAY THROUGH.

Crown 8vo., cloth, 2/6. Second Edition.

By MARCUS CLARKE, Author of "For the Term of his Natural Life."

CHIDIOCK TICHBOURNE.

Crown 8vo. Boards, 2/-; cloth, 2/6.

By MAY CROMMELIN, author of "Love Knots." etc., etc.

FOR THE SAKE OF THE FAMILY.

1 Vol., crown 8vo., coth, 3/6.

LIFE FROM A PARSON'S POINT OF VIEW.

By the Rev. ST. JOHN CORBETT, M.A., Author of "Sermon Outlines," "Echoes of the Sanctuary." Crown 8vo., cloth, 2/6.

REMINGTON & CO.'s NEW BOOKS.

By FREDERICK WICKS.

Fourth and Popular Edition,

THE VEILED HAND,

A Novel of the Sixties, the Seventies, and the Eighties.
With Illustrations by JEAN DE PALEOLOGUE.
416 pp., Large 8vo, handsomely bound in cloth, 3/6; Whole calf, 16/-

THE BROADMOOR PATIENT and THE POOR CLERK,

Two Stories in Psychological Contrast. Abundantly Illustrated by A. MORROW. Demy 8vo, paper covers, 1/-; cloth boards, 2/-

A WOMAN'S COURAGE,

Illustrated by JEAN DE PALEOLOGUE. Paper covers, 1/-

THE BRITISH CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNMENT.

Paper covers, 1/-; cloth, 1/6.

Just out, Second and Cheap Edition, at 3/6.

THE REMINISCENCES OF A MIDSHIPMAN'S LIFE,

From 1850-1856.

By CAPT. CECIL SLOANE-STANLEY, R.N.

REMINGTON & CO.'s NEW BOOKS.

By STANLEY LANE-POOLE.

STUDIES IN A MOSQUE.

Demy 8vo., cloth, 7/6. Second Edition, enlarged.

By THE RIGHT REV. BISHOP WORDSWORTH, D.C.L., LL.D., (late Bishop of St. Andrews.)

THE

WAVERLEY PROVERBIAL BIRTHDAY BOOK.

Pott 8vo, gilt edges, 2/6. In Vellum, 3/6.

SHAKSPEARE'S KNOWLEDGE AND USE OF THE BIBLE.

Cloth, 5/-; calf, 8/-

By MOWBRAY MORRIS.

POET'S WALK.

An Introduction to English Poetry. Fcap. 8vo, 5/-
Third Edition.

By MRS. ARTHUR KENNARD.

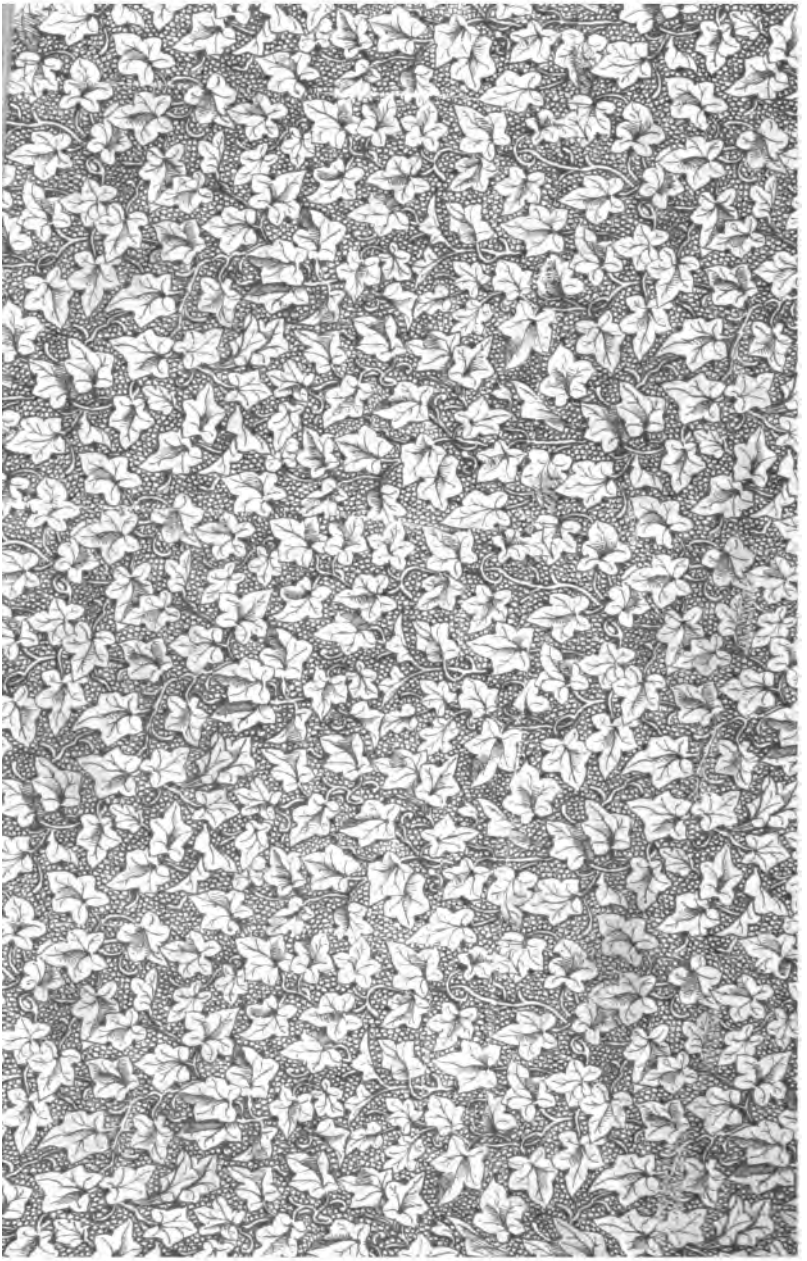
DIOGENES' SANDALS.

Crown 8vo, cloth, 3/6. Second Edition.

By COUNT LEO TOLSTOI.

THE KREUTZER SONATA.

Translated from the Russian by H. Sutherland Edwards.
Paper covers, 1/-. 36th Thousand.





STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
CECIL H. GREEN LIBRARY
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305-6004
(415) 723-1493

All books may be recalled after 7 days

DATE DUE

